

What is left out? You should check further into some of these links, reading the sources cited and keeping in mind the four criteria for evaluating a claim—recency, relevance, accuracy, and reliability. Because you cannot be certain that Internet sources are reviewed or monitored, you need to be scrupulous about examining the claims they make: How much and what kind of evidence supports the writer's (or site's) argument? Can you offer counterarguments?

In the last analysis, it comes down to whether the information you find stands up to the criteria you've learned to apply as a critical reader and writer. If not, move on to other sources. In a Web-based world of information, there is no shortage of material, but you have to train yourself not to settle for the information that is most readily available if it is clearly not credible.

### Steps to Evaluating Internet Sources

- 1 Evaluate the author of the site.** Determine whether the author is an expert.
- 2 Evaluate the organization that supports the site.** Find out what the organization stands for and the extent of its credibility.
- 3 Evaluate the purpose of the site.** What interests are represented on the site? What is the site trying to do? Provide access to legitimate statistics and information? Advance an argument? Spread propaganda?
- 4 Evaluate the information on the site.** Identify the type of information on the site and the extent to which the information is recent, relevant, accurate, and reliable.

### A Practice Sequence: Evaluating Internet Sources

For this exercise, we would like you to work in groups on a common topic. The class can choose its own topic or use one of the topics we suggest on page 127. Then google the topic and agree on a Web site to analyze:

*Group 1:* Evaluate the author of the site.

*Group 2:* Evaluate the organization that supports the site.

*Group 3:* Evaluate the purpose of the site.

*Group 4:* Evaluate the information on the site.

Next, each group should share its evaluation. The goal is to determine the extent to which you believe you could use the information on this site in writing an academic essay.

## From Summary to Synthesis

### *Using Sources to Build an Argument*

When you start to use sources to build your argument, there are certain strategies for working with the words and ideas of others that you will need to learn. Often you can quote the words of an author directly; but just as often you will restate and condense the arguments of others (paraphrasing and summarizing) or make comparisons to the ideas of others in the process of developing your own argument (synthesizing). We walk you through these more challenging strategies in this chapter. We also briefly discuss plagiarism and ways to avoid it and how to integrate quotations into your writing.

### SUMMARIES, PARAPHRASES, AND QUOTATIONS

In contrast to quotations, which involve using another writer's exact words, paraphrases and summaries are both restatements of another writer's ideas in your own words, but they differ in length:

- A paraphrase is usually about the same length as the original passage.
- A summary generally condenses a significantly longer text, conveying the argument not only of a few sentences but also of entire paragraphs, essays, or books.

In your own writing, you might paraphrase a few sentences or even a few paragraphs, but you certainly would not paraphrase a whole essay (much less a whole book). In constructing your arguments, however, you will often have to summarize the main points of the lengthy texts with which you are in conversation.

Both paraphrasing and summarizing are means to inquiry. That is, the act of recasting someone else's words or ideas into your own language, to suit your argument and reach your readers, forces you to think critically: What does this passage really mean? What is most important about it for my argument? How can I best present it to my readers? It requires making choices, not least of which is the best way to present the information—through paraphrase, summary, or direct quotation. In general, the following rules apply:

- *Paraphrase* when all the information in the passage is important, but the language may be difficult for your readers to understand.
- *Summarize* when you need to present only the key ideas of a passage (or an essay or a book) to advance your argument.
- *Quote* when the passage is so effective—so clear, so concise, so authoritative, so memorable—that you would be hard-pressed to improve on it.

## WRITING A PARAPHRASE

A **paraphrase** is a restatement of all the information in a passage in your own words, using your own sentence structure and composed with your own audience in mind to advance your argument.

- When you paraphrase a passage, start by identifying key words and phrases and substituting synonyms for them. A dictionary or thesaurus can help, but you may also have to reread what led up to the passage to remind yourself of the context. For example, did the writer define terms earlier that he or she uses in the passage and now expects you to know?
- Continue by experimenting with word order and sentence structure, combining and recombining phrases to convey what the writer says without replicating his or her style, in the best sequence for your readers. As you shuffle words and phrases, you should begin arriving at a much better understanding of what the writer is saying. By thinking critically, then, you are clarifying the passage for yourself as much as for your readers.

Let's look at a paraphrase of a passage from science fiction writer and scholar James Gunn's essay "Harry Potter as Schooldays Novel"\*:

### ORIGINAL PASSAGE

The situation and portrayal of Harry as an ordinary child with an extraordinary talent make him interesting. He elicits our sympathy at every turn. He plays a Cinderella-like role as the abused child of mean-spirited foster parents

\*Gunn's essay appears in *Mapping the World of Harry Potter: An Unauthorized Exploration of the Bestselling Fantasy Series of All Time*, edited by Mercedes Lackey (Dallas: BenBella, 2006).

who favor other, less-worthy children, and also fits another fantasy role, that of changeling. Millions of children have nursed the notion that they cannot be the offspring of such unremarkable parents; in the Harry Potter books, the metaphor is often literal truth.

## PARAPHRASE

According to James Gunn, the circumstances and depiction of Harry Potter as a normal boy with special abilities captivate us by playing on our empathy. Gunn observes that, like Cinderella, Harry is scorned by his guardians, who treat him far worse than they treat his less-admirable peers. And like another fairy-tale figure, the changeling, Harry embodies the fantasies of children who refuse to believe that they were born of their undistinguished parents (146).

In this paraphrase, synonyms have replaced main words (*circumstances and depiction* for "situation and portrayal," *guardians* for "foster parents"), and the structure of the original sentences has been rearranged. But the paraphrase is about the same length as the original and says essentially the same things as Gunn's original.

Now, compare the paraphrase with this summary:

## SUMMARY

James Gunn observes that Harry Potter's character is compelling because readers empathize with Harry's fairy tale-like plight as an orphan whose gifts are ignored by his foster parents (144–45).

The summary condenses the passage, conveying Gunn's main point without restating the details. Notice how both the paraphrase and the summary indicate that the ideas are James Gunn's, not the writer's—"According to James Gunn," "James Gunn observes"—and signal, with page references, where Gunn's ideas end. *It is essential that you acknowledge your sources*, a subject we come back to in our discussion of plagiarism on page 180. The point we want to make here is that borrowing from the work of others is not always intentional. Many students stumble into plagiarism, especially when they are attempting to paraphrase. Remember that it's not enough to change the words in a paraphrase; you must also change the structure of the sentences. The only sure way to protect yourself is to cite your source.

You may be wondering: "If paraphrasing is so tricky, why bother? What does it add? I can see how the summary of Gunn's paragraph presents information more concisely and efficiently than the original, but the paraphrase doesn't seem to be all that different from the source and doesn't seem to add anything to it. Why not simply quote the original or summarize it?"

Good questions. The answer is that you paraphrase when the ideas in a passage are important but are conveyed in language your readers

may have difficulty understanding. When academics write for their peers, they draw on the specialized vocabulary of their disciplines to make their arguments. By paraphrasing, you may be helping your readers, providing a translation of sorts for those who do not speak the language.

Consider this paragraph by George Lipsitz from his academic book *Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture*, (1990), and compare the paraphrase that follows it:

### ORIGINAL PASSAGE

The transformations in behavior and collective memory fueled by the contradictions of the nineteenth century have passed through three major stages in the United States. The first involved the establishment and codification of commercialized leisure from the invention of the telegraph to the 1890s. The second involved the transition from Victorian to consumer-hedonist values between 1890 and 1945. The third and most important stage, from World War II to the present, involved extraordinary expansion in both the distribution of consumer purchasing power and in both the reach and scope of electronic mass media. The dislocations of urban renewal, suburbanization, and deindustrialization accelerated the demise of tradition in America, while the worldwide pace of change undermined stability elsewhere. The period from World War II to the present marks the final triumph of commercialized leisure, and with it an augmented crisis over the loss of connection to the past.

### PARAPHRASE

Historian George Lipsitz argues that Americans' sense of the past is rooted in cultural changes dating from the 1800s and has evolved through three stages. In the first stage, technological innovations of the nineteenth century gave rise to widespread commercial entertainment. In the second stage, dating from the 1890s to about 1945, attitudes toward the consumption of goods and services changed. Since 1945, in the third stage, increased consumer spending and the growth of the mass media have led to a crisis in which Americans find themselves cut off from their traditions and the memories that give meaning to them (12).

Notice that the paraphrase is not a word-for-word translation of the original. Instead, the writer has made choices that resulted in a slightly briefer and more accessible restatement of Lipsitz's thinking. (Although this paraphrase is shorter than the original passage, a paraphrase can also be a little longer than the original if extra words are needed to help readers understand the original.)

Notice too that several specialized terms and phrases from the original passage—the “codification of commercialized leisure,” “the transition from Victorian to consumer-hedonist values,” “the dislocations of urban renewal, suburbanization, and deindustrialization”—have disappeared. The writer not only looked up these terms and phrases in the dictionary

but also reread the several pages that preceded the original passage to understand what Lipsitz meant by them.

The paraphrase is not an improvement on the original passage—in fact, historians would probably prefer what Lipsitz wrote—but it may help readers who do not share Lipsitz's expertise understand his point without distorting his argument.

Now compare this summary to the paraphrase:

### SUMMARY

Historian George Lipsitz argues that technological, social, and economic changes dating from the nineteenth century have culminated in what he calls a “crisis over the loss of connection to the past,” in which Americans find themselves cut off from the memories of their traditions (12).

Which is better, the paraphrase or the summary? Neither is better or worse in and of itself. Their correctness and appropriateness depend on how the restatements are used in a given argument. That is, the decision to paraphrase or summarize depends entirely on the information you need to convey. Would the details in the paraphrase strengthen your argument? Or is a summary sufficient? In this case, if you plan to focus your argument on the causes of America's loss of cultural memory (the rise of commercial entertainment, changes in spending habits, globalization), then a paraphrase might be more helpful. But if you plan to define *loss of cultural memory*, then a summary may provide enough context for the next stage of your argument.

### Steps to Writing a Paraphrase

- 1 Decide whether to paraphrase.** If your readers don't need all the information in the passage, consider summarizing it or presenting the key points as part of a summary of a longer passage. If a passage is clear, concise, and memorable as originally written, consider quoting instead of paraphrasing. Otherwise, and especially if the original was written for an academic audience, you may want to paraphrase the original to make its substance more accessible to your readers.
- 2 Understand the passage.** Start by identifying key words, phrases, and ideas. If necessary, reread the pages leading up to the passage, to place it in context.
- 3 Draft your paraphrase.** Replace key words and phrases with synonyms and alternative phrases (possibly gleaned from the context provided by the surrounding text). Experiment with word order and sentence structure until the paraphrase captures your understanding of the passage, in your own language, for your readers.



- 4 **Acknowledge your source.** That's the only sure way to protect yourself from a charge of plagiarism.

### A Practice Sequence: Paraphrasing

- 1 In one of the sources you've located in your research, find a sentence of some length and complexity, and paraphrase it. Share the original and your paraphrase of it with a classmate, and discuss the effectiveness of your restatement. Is the meaning clear to your reader? Is the paraphrase written in your own language, using your own sentence structure?
- 2 Repeat the activity using a short paragraph from the same source. You and your classmate may want to attempt to paraphrase the same paragraph and then compare results. What differences do you detect?

## WRITING A SUMMARY

As you have seen, a **summary** condenses a body of information, presenting the key ideas and acknowledging their source. Summarizing is not an active way to make an argument, but summaries do provide a common ground of information for readers so that you can make your argument more effectively. You can summarize a paragraph, several paragraphs, an essay, a chapter in a book, or even an entire book, depending on the use you plan to make of the information in your argument.

We suggest a method of summarizing that involves

1. describing the author's key claims,
2. selecting examples to illustrate the author's argument,
3. presenting the gist of the author's argument, and
4. contextualizing what you summarize.

We demonstrate these steps for writing a summary following Clive Thompson's article "On the New Literacy."

### CLIVE THOMPSON

#### On the New Literacy

A print journalist at *New York Magazine*, Clive Thompson started his blog, *Collision Detection*, in September 2002, when he was beginning his year as a Knight Fellow in Science Journalism at MIT. *Collision Detection* has

become one of the most well-regarded blogs on technology and culture. The blog receives approximately 3,000 to 4,000 hits a day. His piece on literacy appeared in *Wired* magazine in 2009.

As the school year begins, be ready to hear pundits fretting once again about how kids today can't write—and technology is to blame. Facebook encourages narcissistic blabbering, video and PowerPoint have replaced carefully crafted essays, and texting has dehydrated language into "bleak, bald, sad shorthand" (as University College of London English professor John Sutherland has moaned). An age of illiteracy is at hand, right?

Andrea Lunsford isn't so sure. Lunsford is a professor of writing and rhetoric at Stanford University, where she has organized a mammoth project called the Stanford Study of Writing to scrutinize college students' prose. From 2001 to 2006, she collected 14,672 student writing samples—everything from in-class assignments, formal essays, and journal entries to emails, blog posts, and chat sessions. Her conclusions are stirring.

"I think we're in the midst of a literacy revolution the likes of which we haven't seen since Greek civilization," she says. For Lunsford, technology isn't killing our ability to write. It's reviving it—and pushing our literacy in bold new directions.

The first thing she found is that young people today write far more than any generation before them. That's because so much socializing takes place online, and it almost always involves text. Of all the writing that the Stanford students did, a stunning 38 percent of it took place out of the classroom—life writing, as Lunsford calls it. Those Twitter updates and lists of 25 things about yourself add up.

It's almost hard to remember how big a paradigm shift this is. Before the Internet came along, most Americans never wrote anything, ever, that wasn't a school assignment. Unless they got a job that required producing text (like in law, advertising, or media), they'd leave school and virtually never construct a paragraph again.

But is this explosion of prose good, on a technical level? Yes. Lunsford's team found that the students were remarkably adept at what rhetoricians call *kairos*—assessing their audience and adapting their tone and technique to best get their point across. The modern world of online writing, particularly in chat and on discussion threads, is conversational and public, which makes it closer to the Greek tradition of argument than the asynchronous letter and essay writing of 50 years ago.

The fact that students today almost always write for an audience (something virtually no one in my generation did) gives them a different sense of what constitutes good writing. In interviews, they defined good

prose as something that had an effect on the world. For them, writing is about persuading and organizing and debating, even if it's over something as quotidian as what movie to go see. The Stanford students were almost always less enthusiastic about their in-class writing because it had no audience but the professor: It didn't serve any purpose other than to get them a grade. As for those texting short-forms and smileys defiling *serious* academic writing? Another myth. When Lunsford examined the work of first-year students, she didn't find a single example of texting speak in an academic paper.

Of course, good teaching is always going to be crucial, as is the mastering of formal academic prose. But it's also becoming clear that online media are pushing literacy into cool directions. The brevity of texting and status updating teaches young people to deploy haiku-like concision. At the same time, the proliferation of new forms of online pop-cultural exegesis—from sprawling TV-show recaps to 15,000-word videogame walkthroughs—has given them a chance to write enormously long and complex pieces of prose, often while working collaboratively with others.

We think of writing as either good or bad. What today's young people know is that knowing who you're writing for and why you're writing might be the most crucial factor of all.

### ■ Describe the Key Claims of the Text

As you read through a text with the purpose of summarizing it, you want to identify how the writer develops his or her argument. You can do this by what we call “chunking,” grouping related material together into the argument's key claims. Here are two strategies to try.

**Notice how paragraphs begin and end.** Often, focusing on the first and last sentences of paragraphs will alert you to the shape and direction of an author's argument. It is especially helpful if the paragraphs are lengthy and full of supporting information, as much academic writing is.

Because of his particular journalistic forum, *Wired* magazine, Thompson's paragraphs are generally rather short, but it's still worth taking a closer look at the first and last sentences of his opening paragraphs:

*Paragraph 1:* As the school year begins, be ready to hear pundits fretting once again about how kids today can't write—and technology is to blame. Facebook encourages narcissistic blabbering, video and PowerPoint have replaced carefully crafted essays, and texting has dehydrated language into “bleak, bald, sad shorthand” (as University College of London English professor John Sutherland has moaned). An age of illiteracy is at hand, right?

*Paragraph 2:* Andrea Lunsford isn't so sure. Lunsford is a professor of writing and rhetoric at Stanford University, where she has organized a mam-

moth project called the Stanford Study of Writing to scrutinize college students' prose. From 2001 to 2006, she collected 14,672 student writing samples—everything from in-class assignments, formal essays, and journal entries to emails, blog posts, and chat sessions. Her conclusions are stirring.

Right away you can see that Thompson has introduced a topic in each paragraph—pundits' criticism of students' use of electronic media in the first, and a national study designed to examine students' literacy in the second—and has indicated a connection between them. In fact, Thompson is explicit in doing so. He asks a question at the end of the first paragraph and then raises doubts as to the legitimacy of critics' denunciation of young people's reliance on blogs and posts to communicate. How will Thompson elaborate on this connection? What major points does he develop?

**Notice the author's point of view and use of transitions.** Another strategy for identifying major points is to pay attention to descriptive words and transitions. For example, Thompson uses a rhetorical question (“An age of illiteracy is at hand, right?”) and then offers a tentative answer (“Andrea Lunsford isn't so sure”) that places some doubt in readers' minds.

Notice, too, the words that Thompson uses to characterize the argument in the first paragraph, which he appears to challenge in the second paragraph. Specifically, he describes these critics as “pundits,” a word that traditionally refers to an expert or knowledgeable individual. However, the notion of a pundit, someone who often appears on popular talk shows, has also been used negatively. Thompson's description of pundits “fretting,” wringing their hands in worry that literacy levels are declining, underscores this negative association of what it means to be a pundit. Finally, Thompson indicates that he does not identify with those who describe students as engaging in “narcissistic blabbering.” This is clear when he characterizes the professor as having “moaned.”

Once you identify an author's point of view, you will start noticing contrasts and oppositions in the argument—instances where the words are less positive, or neutral, or even negative—which are often signaled by how the writer uses transitions.

For example, Thompson begins with his own concession to critics' arguments when he acknowledges in paragraph 8 that educators should expect students to “[master] formal academic prose.” However, he follows this concession with the transition word “but” to signal his own stance in the debate he frames in the first two paragraphs: “online media are pushing literacy into cool directions.” Thompson also recognizes that students who write on blogs tend to write short, abbreviated texts. Still, he qualifies his concern with another transition, “at the same time.” This transition serves to introduce Thompson's strongest claim: New media have given students “a chance to write enormously long and complex pieces of prose, often while working collaboratively with others.”



These strategies can help you recognize the main points of an essay and explain them in a few sentences. For example, you could describe Thompson's key claims in this way:

1. Electronic media give students opportunities to write more than in previous generations, and students have learned to adapt what they are writing in order to have some tangible effect on what people think and how they act.
2. Arguably, reliance on blogging and posting on Twitter and Facebook can foster some bad habits in writing.
3. But at least one major study demonstrates that the benefits of using the new media outweigh the disadvantages. This study indicates that students write lengthy, complex pieces that contribute to creating significant social networks and collaborations.

### ■ Select Examples to Illustrate the Author's Argument

A summary should be succinct, which means you should limit the number of examples or illustrations you use. As you distill the major points of the argument, try to choose one or two examples to illustrate each major point. Here are the examples (in italics) you might use to support Thompson's main points:

1. Electronic media give students opportunities to write more than in previous generations, and students have learned to adapt what they are writing in order to have some tangible effect on what people think and how they act. *Examples from the Stanford study: Students "defined good prose as something that had an effect on the world. For them, writing is about persuading and organizing and debating"* (para. 7).
2. Arguably, reliance on blogging and posting on Twitter and Facebook can foster some bad habits in writing. *Examples of these bad habits include critics' charges of "narcissistic blabbering," "bleak, bald, sad shorthand," and "dehydrated language"* (para. 1). *Thompson's description of texting's "haiku-like concision" (para. 8) seems to combine praise (haiku can be wonderful poetry) with criticism (it can be obscure and unintelligible).*
3. But at least one major study demonstrates that the benefits of using the new media outweigh the disadvantages. *Examples include Thompson's point that the writing in the new media constitutes a "paradigm shift" (para. 5). Andrea Lunsford observes that students are "remarkably adept at what rhetoricians call kairos—assessing their audience and adapting their tone and technique to best get their point across" (para. 6).*

A single concrete example may be sufficient to clarify the point you want to make about an author's argument. Throughout the essay, Thompson derives examples from the Stanford study to support his argument in the

final two paragraphs. The most concrete, specific example of how the new media benefit students as writers appears in paragraph 6, where the primary research of the Stanford study describes students' acquisition of important rhetorical skills of developing writing that is opportune (*kairos*) and purposeful. This one example may be sufficient for the purposes of summarizing Thompson's essay.

### ■ Present the Gist of the Author's Argument

When you present the **gist** of an argument, you are expressing the author's central idea in a sentence or two. The gist is not quite the same thing as the author's thesis statement. Instead, it is your formulation of the author's main idea, composed for the needs of your own argument.

Thompson's observations in paragraph 8 represent his thesis: "But it's also becoming clear that online media are pushing literacy into cool directions. . . . [T]he proliferation of new forms of online pop-cultural exegesis—from sprawling TV-show recaps to 15,000-word videogame walkthroughs—has given [students] a chance to write enormously long and complex pieces of prose, often while working collaboratively with others." In this paragraph, Thompson clearly expresses his central ideas in two sentences, while also conceding some of the critics' concerns. However, in formulating the gist of his argument, you want to do more than paraphrase Thompson. You want to use his position to support your own. For example, suppose you want to qualify the disapproval that some educators have expressed in drawing their conclusions about the new media. You would want to mention Thompson's own concessions when you describe the gist of his argument:

#### GIST

In his essay "On the New Literacy," Clive Thompson, while acknowledging some academic criticism of new media, argues that these media give students opportunities to write more than in previous generations and that students have learned to adapt what they are writing in order to have some tangible effect on what people think and how they act.

Notice that this gist could not have been written based only on Thompson's thesis statement. It reflects knowledge of Thompson's major points, his examples, and his concessions.

### ■ Contextualize What You Summarize

Your summary should help readers understand the context of the conversation:

- Who is the author?
- What is the author's expertise?

- What is the title of the work?
- Where did the work appear?
- What was the occasion of the work's publication? What prompted the author to write the work?
- What are the issues?
- Who else is taking part in the conversation, and what are their perspectives on the issues?

Again, because a summary must be concise, you must make decisions about how much of the conversation your readers need to know. If your assignment is to practice summarizing, it may be sufficient to include only information about the author and the source. However, if you are using the summary to build your own argument, you may need to provide more context. Your practice summary of Thompson's essay should mention that he is a journalist and should cite the title of and page references to his essay. You also may want to include information about Thompson's audience, publication information, and what led to the work's publication. Was it published in response to another essay or book, or to commemorate an important event?

We compiled our notes on Thompson's essay (key claims, examples, gist, context) in a worksheet (Figure 7.1). All of our notes in the worksheet constitute a type of prewriting, our preparation for writing the summary. Creating a worksheet like this can help you track your thoughts as you plan to write a summary. (You can download a template of this worksheet at [bedfordstmartins.com/frominquiry](http://bedfordstmartins.com/frominquiry).)

KEY CLAIM(S)	EXAMPLES	GIST	CONTEXT
1. Electronic media prompt more student writing than ever before, and students use their writing to make a difference.	The Stanford study: Students "defined good prose as something that had an effect on the world" (para. 7).	In his essay "On the New Literacy," Clive Thompson, while acknowledging some academic criticism of new media, argues that these media give students opportunities to write more than in previous generations and that students have learned to adapt what they are writing in order to have some tangible effect on what people think and how they act.	Thompson is a journalist who has written widely on issues in higher education. His essay "On the New Literacy" appeared in <i>Wired</i> in August 2009 ( <a href="http://www.wired.com/techbiz/people/magazine/17-09/st_thompson">http://www.wired.com/techbiz/people/magazine/17-09/st_thompson</a> ).
2. Arguably, reliance on blogging and posting can foster some bad writing habits.	Complaints of "bleak, bald, sad shorthand" and "narcissistic blabbering" (para. 1); texting can be obscure.		Under consideration is the debate that he frames in his opening paragraphs.
3. But one major study shows the benefits of new media on student writing.	A "paradigm shift" (para. 5) to fluency in multiple formats and skill in assessing and persuading audiences.		

FIGURE 7.1 Worksheet for Writing a Summary

Here is our summary of Thompson's essay:

*The gist of Thompson's argument.*

In his essay "On the New Literacy," Clive Thompson, while acknowledging some academic criticism of new media, argues that these media give students opportunities to write more than in previous generations and that students have learned to adapt what they are writing in order to have some tangible effect on what people think and how they act. Arguably, reliance on blogging and posting on Twitter and Facebook can foster some bad habits in writing. But at least one major study demonstrates that the benefits of using the new media outweigh the disadvantages. Students write lengthy, complex pieces that contribute to creating significant social networks and collaborations.

*This concession helps to balance enthusiasm based on a single study.*

*Thompson's main point with example.*

## Steps to Writing a Summary

- 1 Describe the key claims of the text.** To understand the shape and direction of the argument, study how paragraphs begin and end, and pay attention to the author's point of view and use of transitions. Then combine what you have learned into a few sentences describing the key claims.
- 2 Select examples to illustrate the author's argument.** Find one or two examples to support each key claim. You may need only one example when you write your summary.
- 3 Present the gist of the author's argument.** Describe the author's central idea in your own language with an eye to where you expect your argument to go.
- 4 Contextualize what you summarize.** Cue your readers into the conversation. Who is the author? Where and when did the text appear? Why did the author write? Who else is in the conversation?

## A Practice Sequence: Summarizing

- 1 Summarize a text that you have been studying for research or for one of your other classes.** You may want to limit yourself to an excerpt of just a few paragraphs or a few pages. Follow the four steps we've described, using a summary worksheet for notes, and write a summary of the text. Then share the excerpt and your summary of it with two of your peers. Be prepared to justify your



choices in composing the summary. Do your peers agree that your summary captures what is important in the original?

- 2 With a classmate, choose a brief text of about three pages. Each of you should use the method we describe above to write a summary of the text. Exchange your summaries and worksheets, and discuss the effectiveness of your summaries. Each of you should be prepared to discuss your choice of key claims and examples and your wording of the gist. Did you set forth the context effectively?

## SYNTHESIS VERSUS SUMMARY

A **synthesis** is a discussion that forges connections between the arguments of two or more authors. Like a summary, a synthesis requires you to understand the key claims of each author's argument, including his or her use of supporting examples and evidence. Also like a summary, a synthesis requires you to present a central idea, a *gist*, to your readers. But in contrast to a summary, which explains the context of a source, a synthesis creates a context for your own argument. That is, when you write a synthesis comparing two or more sources, you demonstrate that you are aware of the larger conversation about the issue and begin to claim your own place in that conversation.

Most academic arguments begin with a synthesis that sets the stage for the argument that follows. By comparing what others have written on a given issue, writers position themselves in relation to what has come before them, acknowledging the contributions of their predecessors as they advance their own points of view.

Like a summary, a synthesis requires analysis: You have to break down arguments and categorize their parts to see how they work together. In our summary of Thompson's essay (p. 151), the parts we looked at were the key claims, the examples and evidence that supported them, the central idea (conveyed in the gist), and the context. But in a synthesis, your main purpose is not simply to report what another author has said. Rather, you must think critically about how multiple points of view intersect on your issue, and decide what those intersections mean.

Comparing different points of view prompts you to ask why they differ. It also makes you more aware of *counterarguments*—passages where claims conflict (“writer X says this, but writer Y asserts just the opposite”) or at least differ (“writer X interprets this information this way, while writer Y sees it differently”). And it starts you formulating your own counterarguments: “Neither X nor Y has taken this into account. What if they had?”

Keep in mind that the purpose of a synthesis is not merely to list the similarities and differences you find in different sources or to assert your agreement with one source as **opposed** to others. Instead, it sets up your argument. Once you discover **connections** among texts, you have to decide

what those connections mean to you and your readers. What bearing do they have on your own thinking? How can you make use of them in your argument?

## WRITING A SYNTHESIS

To compose an effective synthesis, you must (1) make connections among ideas in different texts, (2) decide what those connections mean, and (3) formulate the gist of what you've read, much like you did when you wrote a summary. The difference is that in a synthesis, your gist should be a succinct statement that brings into focus not the central idea of one text but the relationship among different ideas in multiple texts.

To help you grasp strategies of writing a synthesis, read the following essays by journalists Cynthia Haven and Josh Keller, which, like Clive Thompson's essay, deal with the effects of new media on the quality of students' writing. We have annotated the Haven and Keller readings not only to comment on their ideas but also to connect their ideas with those of Thompson. Annotating your texts in this manner is a useful first step in writing a synthesis.

Following the Haven and Keller selections, we explain how annotating contributes to writing a synthesis. Then we show how you can use a worksheet to organize your thinking when you are formulating a gist of your synthesis. Finally, we present our own synthesis based on the texts of Thompson, Haven, and Keller.

### CYNTHIA HAVEN

#### The New Literacy: Stanford Study Finds Richness and Complexity in Students' Writing

Cynthia Haven was born in Detroit and educated at the University of Michigan. A writer who has received more than a dozen literary and journalism awards, Haven is currently a literary critic at the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She has long been affiliated with Stanford University and is a regular contributor to its magazine, *Stanford Report*, where this article appeared in 2009.

Begins with claims in the first two paragraphs for our consideration.

Today's kids don't just write for grades anymore. They write to shake the world.

Moreover, they are writing more than any previous generation, ever, in history. They navigate in a bewildering new arena where writers and their audiences have merged.



*Cites a study that supports these claims and sets up the terms of a debate: that new media may not be eroding literacy as "conventional wisdom" might suggest.*

These are among the startling findings in the Stanford Study of Writing, spearheaded by Professor Andrea Lunsford, director of Stanford's Program in Writing and Rhetoric. The study refutes conventional wisdom and provides a wholly new context for those who wonder "whether Google is making us stupid and whether Facebook is frying our brains," said Lunsford.

The five-year study investigated the writing of Stanford students during their undergraduate careers and their first year afterward, whether at a job or in graduate school.

*Observing the way the study employed a random sample helps give legitimacy to the study and support for the study's claims.*

The study began in September 2001, when Lunsford invited a random sample of the freshman class to participate in the study. Of the 243 invited, 189 accepted the invitation—about 12 percent of that year's class.

Students agreed to submit the writing they did for all their classes, including multimedia presentations, problem sets, lab reports, and honors theses. They also submitted as much as they wanted of what Lunsford calls "life writing," that is, the writing they did for themselves, their families, their friends, and the world at large.

*The volume and range of writing reinforces the initial claim: Today's students are writing more than previous generations.*

Lunsford was unprepared for the avalanche of material that ensued: about 15,000 pieces of writing, including emails in 11 languages, blog postings, private journal entries and poetry. The last, in particular, surprised her: "If there's any closeted group at Stanford, it's poets."

Only 62 percent of the writing was for their classwork.

While data analysis is ongoing, Lunsford said the study's first goal was "to paint a picture of the writing that these young writers do" and to portray "its richness and complexity."

Her conclusion: Although today's kids are "writing more than ever before in history," it may not look like the writing of yesterday. The focus of today's writing is "more about instantaneous communication." It's also about audience.

*Implied comparison between the current generation, which communicates to create change, and previous generations, who wrote to fulfill classroom assignments.*

*Haven provides a representative case example from the study to illustrate one of the conclusions drawn from the research: that students are writing more outside of class to "get something done."*

## Writing as Vehicle of Change

For these students, "Good writing changes something. It doesn't just sit on the page. It gets up, walks off the page, and changes something," whether it's a website or a poster for a walkathon.

More than earlier generations, said Lunsford, "Young people today are aware of the precarious nature of our lives. They understand the dangers that await us." Hence, "Writing is a way to get a sense of power."

Twenty-six-year-old Mark Otuteye, one of 36 students in the study group who agreed to be interviewed once a year, is in many ways representative. While at Stanford, he started a performance poetry group in response to 2003 student protests against growing involvement in Iraq.

"Academic writing seemed to be divorced from a public audience. I was used to communicating not only privately, with emails, but publicly, with websites, blogs, and social networks," said Otuteye, CEO of AES Connect, a social media design company (he's also worked at Google).

"I was used to writing transactionally—not just for private reflection, but writing to actually get something done in the world." For Otuteye, a half-Ghanaian student in the Program in African and African American Studies who went on to get a Stanford master's degree in modern thought and literature (2005) and, with a Marshall Scholarship, a master's degree from the University of Sussex in artificial intelligence (2008), academic writing was often "less important" than his writing for the "real world"—for example, the fliers he put up all over Stanford to promote his poetry group.

Lunsford cautioned that "audiences are very slippery," and that, in the Internet age, "in a way the whole world can be your audience. It's inspirational, really, but it's hard to know who they are or what they'll do."

Anyone anywhere can be an overnight pundit with an audience of millions—or can ramble on in

*Haven raises a question that many critics have about students being trapped in a limited view of the world.*

an unregarded cyberspace tirade. A lively blog “conversation” may consist largely of one writer assuming different masks. Does much of this writing, moreover, trap them in a world of other 19-year-olds, their peers?

### Audiences Change over Time

Otuteye noted that the students in the study were already writing for professors, friends, and parents. Moreover, as they transition into the work world after graduation, they begin to see “those audiences begin to mix and overlap. All the communication that they do online, with the exception of email, can become public.”

“The skill of being able to manage multiple, overlapping audiences is a principle of rhetoric, a skill I was able to hone and perfect not only in academic writing, but in the performance writing I did and all the rhetorical activity I was engaged in at Stanford.”

He said that even the computer code he writes now follows “the same principles of rhetoric, specifically around audience, that is used in poetry and academic writing.” A line of code, he said, could have four or more audiences, including other engineers and computers.

Lunsford underscored the need for higher education to adapt; for example, students could post their essays online, accommodating their preference for an audience and online discussion. But Lunsford said adaptation must go even further: What does an English professor say when a student approaches her and says, “I know you’d like me to write an essay, but I’d like to make a documentary”?

In light of this brave new world, it can be hard to remember that only a few decades ago doomsday prophets were predicting the death of the written word, as telephones and television increased their domination over a culture, and business CEOs dictated their letters into Dictaphones.

In those days, graduation from college largely meant goodbye to writing. An office memo, letters, or “annotated cookbooks” were about the only written expres-

*The case example helps support the claim that new media enable students to learn to value rhetorical skills.*

*Is it higher education—not students—that needs to change to meet the demands of new media?*

*This is Haven’s own stand. It’s clear that these prognosticators were wrong, and they may be wrong again.*

sions of the adult world, said Lunsford, unless they were headed for jobs in the media or in academia. Writing was “instrumental”—designed for a purpose, such as a purchasing agreement, or advertising to sell a product.

### Redefining “Writing”

Today’s landscape alters fundamental notions of what writing is. According to Lunsford, “The everyday understanding of writing is usually operational as opposed to epistemic.”

Epistemic writing creates knowledge. (Think of all those times when you don’t know what to think till you begin writing.) Such epistemic writing is an exploration, rather than declaration. It’s the writing that dominates journals, letters, and many blogs. Clearly, the students’ sense of agency extends to self-knowledge as well as changing the world.

Comparing the Stanford students’ writing with their peers from the mid-1980s, Lunsford found that the writing of today’s students is about three times as long—they have “the ability to generate more prose.”

They are also likely to make different kinds of errors. The number one error 20 years ago was spelling—a problem easily circumvented today by a spell-checker. Today’s number one error is using the wrong word—“constraint” instead of “constrained,” for example, or using the wrong preposition.

Lunsford recalls one student writing “I feel necrotic” rather than “neurotic.”

Some nevertheless insist that writing today is substandard, littered with too many LOLs and OMGs. However, Lunsford noted that Stanford students were adept at different writing for different audiences. Moreover, they are changing the game: For a graphic novel such as Chris Ware’s *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth*, “traditional reading strategies do not work. Every single word is important.” And websites, though they can be skimmed with a click, can be very labor- and thought-intensive.

*Defines a specialized term, “epistemic.”*

*But is the writing “three times” as effective? Is it good writing?*

*Counterargument to Lunsford’s position: Students have not mastered the technical aspects of writing. However, the quotation does not really answer the question.*



“College writers need to be able to retain the best of print literacy, and know how to deploy it for their own purposes,” said Lunsford. “They also need and deserve to be exposed to new forms of expression.”

With the more playful, inventive and spontaneous forms of writing available to them, are today’s students losing the taste for more complex English?

“Every time I pick up Henry James, I have to relearn how to read Henry James. We don’t want to lose the ability to do that kind of reading and writing,” said Lunsford.

“Thinking about hard things requires hard prose. We can boil things down, prepare for a different audiences, but when it comes to hard things, I don’t think it can be worked out in 140 characters.”

*Concludes with a quotation about how the use of new media does not devalue traditional conceptions of literacy, writing, and classic literature.*

JOSH KELLER

## Studies Explore Whether the Internet Makes Students Better Writers

Josh Keller is a reporter for *The Chronicle of Higher Education* in Washington, D.C. The weekly publication focuses on issues in higher education and on news and serves as a job-information source for college and university faculty members, administrators, and students. His piece appeared in 2009.

As a student at Stanford University, Mark Otuteye wrote in any medium he could find. He wrote blog posts, slam poetry, to-do lists, teaching guides, e-mail and Facebook messages, diary entries, short stories. He wrote a poem in computer code, and he wrote a computer program that helped him catalog all the things he had written.

But Mr. Otuteye hated writing academic papers. Although he had vague dreams of becoming an English professor, he saw academic writing as a “soulless exercise” that felt like “jumping through hoops.” When given a writing assignment in class, he says, he

*Keller uses the same student example as Haven to make the same point about college writing assignments.*

would usually adopt a personal tone and more or less ignore the prompt. “I got away with it,” says Mr. Otuteye, who graduated from Stanford in 2006. “Most of the time.”

The rise of online media has helped raise a new generation of college students who write far more, and in more-diverse forms, than their predecessors did. But the implications of the shift are hotly debated, both for the future of students’ writing and for the college curriculum.

Some scholars say that this new writing is more engaged and more connected to an audience, and that colleges should encourage students to bring lessons from that writing into the classroom. Others argue that tweets and blog posts enforce bad writing habits and have little relevance to the kind of sustained, focused argument that academic work demands.

A new generation of longitudinal studies, which track large numbers of students over several years, is attempting to settle this argument. The “Stanford Study of Writing,” a five-year study of the writing lives of Stanford students—including Mr. Otuteye—is probably the most extensive to date.

In a shorter project, undergraduates in a first-year writing class at Michigan State University were asked to keep a diary of the writing they did in any environment, whether blogging, text messaging, or gaming. For each act of writing over a two-week period, they recorded the time, genre, audience, location, and purpose of their writing.

“What was interesting to us was how small a percentage of the total writing the school writing was,” says Jeffrey T. Grabill, the study’s lead author, who is director of the Writing in Digital Environments Research Center at Michigan State. In the diaries and in follow-up interviews, he says, students often described their social, out-of-class writing as more persistent and meaningful to them than their in-class work was.

“Digital technologies, computer networks, the Web—all of those things have led to an explosion in

*Sums up two opposed points of view on the debate.*

*Goes beyond Haven to cite an additional study at Michigan State that reached similar conclusions as the Stanford study.*

*Additional evidence that supports the Stanford study.*

writing," Mr. Grabill says. "People write more now than ever. In order to interact on the Web, you have to write."

*Keller adds the voices of scholars of writing to comment on the value of new media.*

Kathleen Blake Yancey, a professor of English at Florida State University and a former president of the National Council of Teachers of English, calls the current period "the age of composition" because, she says, new technologies are driving a greater number of people to compose with words and other media than ever before.

"This is a new kind of composing because it's so variegated and because it's so intentionally social," Ms. Yancey says. Although universities may not consider social communication as proper writing, it still has a strong influence on how students learn to write, she says. "We ignore it at our own peril."

*Unlike Thompson and Haven, Keller provides the counterarguments of scholars who dispute the findings of the Stanford study.*

But some scholars argue that students should adapt their writing habits to their college course work, not the other way around. Mark Bauerlein, a professor of English at Emory University, cites the reading and writing scores in the National Assessment of Educational Progress, which have remained fairly flat for decades. It is a paradox, he says: "Why is it that with young people reading and writing more words than ever before in human history, we find no gains in reading and writing scores?"

### The Right Writing

*Underscores the difficulty of drawing conclusions either way.*

Determining how students develop as writers, and why they improve or not, is difficult. Analyzing a large enough sample of students to reach general conclusions about how the spread of new technologies affects the writing process, scholars say, is a monumental challenge.

The sheer amount of information that is relevant to a student's writing development is daunting and difficult to collect: formal and informal writing, scraps of notes and diagrams, personal histories, and fleeting conversations and thoughts that never make it onto the printed page.

*This summary of the Stanford study suggests that researchers there have responded to the complexity of measuring outcomes of writing in any medium.*

The Stanford study is trying to collect as much of that material as possible. Starting in 2001, researchers at the university began collecting extensive writing samples from 189 students, roughly 12 percent of the freshman class. Students were given access to a database where they could upload copies of their work, and some were interviewed annually about their writing experiences. By 2006 researchers had amassed nearly 14,000 pieces of writing.

Students in the study "almost always" had more enthusiasm for the writing they were doing outside of class than for their academic work, says Andrea A. Lunsford, the study's director. Mr. Otuteye submitted about 700 pieces of writing and became the study's most prolific contributor.

The report's authors say they included nonacademic work to better investigate the links between academic and nonacademic writing in students' writing development. One of the largest existing longitudinal studies of student writing, which started at Harvard University in the late 1990s, limited its sample to academic writing, which prevented researchers from drawing direct conclusions about that done outside of class.

In looking at students' out-of-class writing, the Stanford researchers say they found several traits that were distinct from in-class work. Not surprisingly, the writing was self-directed; it was often used to connect with peers, as in social networks; and it usually had a broader audience.

*Cites the study at George Mason. Writing on blogs is more engaging than writing in school, and it represents the ways students sustain social networks (paras. 17–20).*

The writing was also often associated with accomplishing an immediate, concrete goal, such as organizing a group of people or accomplishing a political end, says Paul M. Rogers, one of the study's authors. The immediacy might help explain why students stayed so engaged, he says. "When you talked to them about their out-of-class writing, they would talk about writing to coordinate out-of-class activity," says Mr. Rogers, an assistant professor of English at George Mason University. "A lot of them were a lot more



conscious of the effect their writing was having on other people.”

Mr. Rogers believes from interviews with students that the data in the study will help show that students routinely learn the basics of writing concepts wherever they write the most. For instance, he says, students who compose messages for an audience of their peers on a social-networking Web site were forced to be acutely aware of issues like audience, tone, and voice.

“The out-of-class writing actually made them more conscious of the things writing teachers want them to think about,” the professor says.

Mr. Otuteye, who recently started a company that develops Web applications, says he paid close attention to the writing skills of his peers at Stanford as the co-founder of a poetry slam. It was the students who took their out-of-class writing seriously who made the most progress, he says. “Everybody was writing in class, but the people who were writing out of and inside of class, that was sort of critical to accelerating their growth as writers.”

Although analysis of the Stanford study is still at an early stage, other scholars say they would like to start similar studies. At the University of California, several writing researchers say they are trying to get financial support for a longitudinal study of 300 students on the campuses in Irvine, Santa Barbara, and Davis.

### Curricular Implications

The implications of the change in students’ writing habits for writing and literature curricula are up for debate. Much of the argument turns on whether online writing should be seen as a welcome new direction or a harmful distraction.

Mr. Grabill, from Michigan State, says college writing instruction should have two goals: to help students become better academic writers, and to help them become better writers in the outside world. The second, broader goal is often lost, he says, either

*Why does it have to be “either/or”? Isn’t it possible that there’s a middle ground?*

*Grabill criticizes the critics, pointing out that they have lost sight of an important goal: Students should be able to write to*

*a general, public audience, not just academic readers (paras. 24–30).*

*This seems rather anecdotal.*

*But does this occur—avoiding a “fire wall”?*

*One critic concedes that writing in electronic media can help struggling writers, but he also*

because it is seen as not the college’s responsibility, or because it seems unnecessary.

“The unstated assumption there is that if you can write a good essay for your literature professor, you can write anything,” Mr. Grabill says. “That’s utter nonsense.”

The writing done outside of class is, in some ways, the opposite of a traditional academic paper, he says. Much out-of-class writing, he says, is for a broad audience instead of a single professor, tries to solve real-world problems rather than accomplish academic goals, and resembles a conversation more than an argument.

Rather than being seen as an impoverished, secondary form, online writing should be seen as “the new normal,” he says, and treated in the curriculum as such: “The writing that students do in their lives is a tremendous resource.”

Ms. Yancey, at Florida State, says out-of-class writing can be used in a classroom setting to help students draw connections among disparate types of writing. In one exercise she uses, students are asked to trace the spread of a claim from an academic journal to less prestigious forms of media, like magazines and newspapers, in order to see how arguments are diluted. In another, students are asked to pursue the answer to a research question using only blogs, and to create a map showing how they know if certain information is trustworthy or not.

The idea, she says, is to avoid creating a “fire wall” between in-class and out-of-class writing.

“If we don’t invite students to figure out the lessons they’ve learned from that writing outside of school and bring those inside of school, what will happen is only the very bright students” will do it themselves, Ms. Yancey says. “It’s the rest of the population that we’re worried about.”

Writing in electronic media probably does benefit struggling students in a rudimentary way, says Emory’s Mr. Bauerlein, because they are at least forced to string sentences together: “For those kids who

warns that educators should temper their enthusiasm for blogging and other online writing (paras. 32–35).

Has he studied this?

Another scholar reaffirms a finding in the Stanford study: that electronic media represent a cultural shift that educators must learn to accept and adapt to.

Really, people are not shaped by what they read?

wouldn't be writing any words anyway, that's going to improve their very low-level skills."

But he spends more of his time correcting, not integrating, the writing habits that students pick up outside of class. The students in his English courses often turn in papers that are "stylistically impoverished," and the Internet is partly to blame, he says. Writing for one's peers online, he says, encourages the kind of quick, unfocused thought that results in a scarcity of coherent sentences and a limited vocabulary.

"When you are writing so much to your peers, you're writing to other 17-year-olds, so your vocabulary is going to be the conventional vocabulary of the 17-year-old idiom," Mr. Bauerlein says.

Students must be taught to home in on the words they write and to resist the tendency to move quickly from sentence to sentence, he says. Writing scholars, too, should temper their enthusiasm for new technologies before they have fully understood the implications, he says. Claims that new forms of writing should take a greater prominence in the curriculum, he says, are premature.

"The sweeping nature of their pronouncements to me is either grandiose or flatulent, or you could say that this is a little irresponsible to be pushing for practices so hard that are so new," Mr. Bauerlein says. "We don't know what the implications of these things will be. Slow down!"

Deborah Brandt, a professor of English at the University of Wisconsin at Madison who studies the recent history of reading and writing, says the growth of writing online should be seen as part of a broader cultural shift toward mass authorship. Some of the resistance to a more writing-centered curriculum, she says, is based on the view that writing without reading can be dangerous because students will be untethered to previous thought, and reading levels will decline.

But that view, she says, is "being challenged by the literacy of young people, which is being developed

primarily by their writing. They're going to be reading, but they're going to be reading to write, and not to be shaped by what they read."

## ■ Make Connections Among Different Texts

The texts by Thompson, Haven, and Keller all deal with the emergence of new electronic media and their effects on students' development as writers. These texts are very much in conversation with one another, as each author focuses on what research tells us are the benefits of the new media and the potential ways that electronic media can limit young writers' growth:

- Thompson uses the Stanford study to emphasize the ways that students' participation on blogs and the like helps students learn to adapt their writing for specific audiences and to write fairly complex texts to affect the ways readers think and act.
- Haven provides a more elaborate analysis of the Stanford study to argue that we are witnessing a revolution in literacy, the likes of which we have not experienced since the development of classical rhetoric.
- Keller offers converging pieces of evidence to support the findings from the Stanford study that Thompson and Haven discuss, but additionally he provides a more detailed counterargument that is also based on research.

All three authors seem to agree that the introduction of new electronic media has contributed to a paradigm shift in the uses of writing—to create agency and community—but they seem to vary in the concessions they make to counterarguments.

Notice how our annotations call out connections. "Keller uses the same student example as Haven to make the same point about college writing assignments." "Keller adds the voices of scholars of writing to comment on the value of new media." "Unlike Thompson and Haven, Keller provides the counterarguments of scholars who dispute the findings of the Stanford study."

With these annotations, we are starting to think critically about the ideas in the essays. Notice, however, that not all of the annotations make connections. Some note examples that support the argument that electronic media benefit writers, while others point to examples that provide compelling evidence for the counterargument. Still other annotations raise questions about the basis on which researchers and teachers reached their conclusions. In the end, you should not expect that every annotation will contribute to your synthesis. Instead, use them to record your responses and also to spur your thinking.



## ■ Decide What Those Connections Mean

Having annotated the selections, we filled out the worksheet in Figure 7.2, making notes in the grid to help us see the three texts in relation to one another. Our worksheet included columns for

- author and source information
- the gist of each author's arguments
- supporting examples and illustrations
- counterarguments
- our own thoughts

A worksheet like this one can help you concentrate on similarities and differences in the texts to determine what the connections among texts mean. (You can download a template for this worksheet at [bedfordstmartins.com/frominquiry](http://bedfordstmartins.com/frominquiry).) Of course, you can design your own worksheet as well, tailoring it to your needs and preferences. If you want to take very detailed notes about your authors and sources, for example, you may want to have separate columns for each.

Once you start making connections, including points of agreement and disagreement, you can start identifying counterarguments in the reading—for example, Keller quotes a scholar who cites a national study, the National Assessment of Education Progress, to dampen enthusiasm for the claims that Thompson and Haven give so much attention to. Identifying counterarguments gives you a sense of what is at issue for each author. And determining what authors think in relation to one another can help you realize what is at issue for you. Suppose you are struck by Haven's implicit argument that a revolution in literacy is occurring and that institutions of higher education, not students, need to respond to changes in the nature of literacy and communication. But you also recognize in Keller's analysis that questions persist about studies conducted to assess the development of students' growth and development as writers. How persuasive are the studies conducted at Stanford, Michigan State, and George Mason? What do we really know? And how can we further test the claims experts make about electronic media and paradigm shifts? Turning these ideas and questions over in your mind, you may be able to decide on a topic you want to explore and develop.

## ■ Formulate the Gist of What You've Read

Remember that your gist should bring into focus the relationship among different ideas in multiple texts. Looking at the information juxtaposed on the worksheet, you can begin to construct the gist of your synthesis:

- Clive Thompson cites research conducted at Stanford to challenge prevailing arguments about electronic media's effects on students' literacy.

AUTHOR AND SOURCE	GIST OF ARGUMENT	EXAMPLES/ ILLUSTRATIONS	COUNTERARGUMENTS	WHAT I THINK
Clive Thompson, "On the New Literacy," <i>Wired</i> (2009)	Research challenges prevailing arguments about electronic media's effects on students' literacy, suggesting they may be more literate than in the past.	The Stanford study, with its sample of more than 14,000 pieces of writing and randomized sample of student participants. One case example.	Student writing is full of "texting-speak."	The Stanford study is persuasive, especially given the size of the study. Not much counter-evidence.
Cynthia Haven, "The New Literacy: Stanford Study Finds Richness and Complexity in Students' Writing," <i>Stanford Report</i> (2009)	A study indicates a possible revolution in literacy. Using online social networks to create change, students now write more, more persuasively, and more adaptively than ever before.	Stanford study and case example of one student.	Students who spend most of their time writing on electronic networks do not attend to the technical aspects of communication and have a limited sense of their audience.	This is a more thorough review of the Stanford study. It emphasizes how much more meaningful writing is outside of the classroom.
Josh Keller, "Studies Explore Whether the Internet Makes Students Better Writers," <i>Chronicle of Higher Education</i> (2009)	Two studies suggest that electronic media, in giving students more opportunities to write and honing their sense of audience, have made them better writers than previous generations. But an emerging body of evidence challenges these recent claims, which force educators to consider what they consider good writing.	Studies at Stanford, Michigan State, and George Mason. Expert opinion from faculty at Florida State and the University of Wisconsin.	Critics like Professor Bauerlein at Emory University argue that literacy is not progressing steadily, as some have observed, at least not based on standardized tests. He suggests that writing solely to one's peers online encourages spontaneous but unfocused thought and a limited vocabulary.	The three studies together are quite powerful. I am not sure that standardized tests developed a generation ago are the best way to measure increases in literacy. And Bauerlein relies on anecdotal evidence to make his argument: that writing in electronic media limits thinking or writing quality. I should check if any studies exist to support Bauerlein.

FIGURE 7.2 Worksheet for Writing a Synthesis

Indeed, despite pundits' complaints, students may be more literate than in the past.

- Cynthia Haven also analyzes the Stanford study, which indicates that we may very well be experiencing a revolution in literacy. Students use electronic media to sustain social networks and create change. As Thompson also points out, students are writing more than ever before and are more adept at applying principles of rhetoric than were students in previous generations. Those in higher education may have to change in order to respond to students' uses of electronic media, not the other way around.
- Josh Keller points to two additional studies of writing to suggest that students are developing literate practices that are more impressive than those of previous generations. This can be attributed to the fact that current students have more opportunities to write and they know what it means to write for an audience. But he also observes that an emerging body of evidence challenges these recent claims, forcing educators to consider what constitutes good writing.

How do you formulate this information into a gist? You can use a transition word such as *although* or *however* to connect ideas that different authors bring together while conveying their differences. Thus, a gist of these essays might read:

### GIST OF A SYNTHESIS

Although Clive Thompson and Cynthia Haven suggest that new electronic media have created a paradigm shift in the ways educators think about writing, journalists such as Josh Keller have also cited evidence that dampens enthusiasm for the benefits of writing on blogs without students' having instruction in formal, academic writing.

Having drafted the gist, we returned to our notes on the worksheet to complete the synthesis, presenting examples and using transitions to signal the relationships among the texts and their ideas. Here is our brief synthesis of the three texts:

*The gist of our synthesis. "Although" signals that Thompson's and Haven's arguments are qualified.*

*Specific example of a key piece of evidence that has sparked debate.*

Although Clive Thompson and Cynthia Haven suggest that new electronic media have created a paradigm shift in the ways educators think about writing, journalists such as Josh Keller have also cited evidence that dampens enthusiasm for the benefits of writing on blogs without students' having instruction in formal, academic writing. In particular, Thompson cites research conducted at Stanford University to challenge prevailing arguments about electronic media's effects on students' literacy. The Stanford study, with its sample of more than 14,000 pieces of writing and randomized sample of student participants, seems very persuasive.

Indeed, despite pundits' complaints, students may be more literate than in the past.

Cynthia Haven also analyzes the Stanford study, indicating that we may very well be experiencing a revolution in literacy. Students use electronic media to sustain social networks and create change. As Thompson also points out, students are writing more than ever before and are more adept at applying principles of rhetoric than were students in previous generations. Those in higher education may have to change in order to respond to students' uses of electronic media, not the other way around.

Finally, Josh Keller points to two additional studies of writing to suggest that students are developing literate practices that are more impressive than those of previous generations. This can be attributed to the fact that current students have more opportunities to write and they know what it means to write for an audience. However, Keller, more than Thompson and Haven, observes that an emerging body of evidence challenges these recent claims, forcing educators to consider what constitutes good writing. Keller's analysis reveals that questions persist about studies conducted to assess the development of students' growth and development as writers. How persuasive are the studies conducted at Stanford, Michigan State, and George Mason? What do we really know, and what do we need to know? Further, how can we test the claims experts make about electronic media and paradigm shifts?

*Transition: Both Thompson and Haven give less attention to the counterargument than they should.*

*Questions set up direction of what is to follow.*

Writing a synthesis, like writing a summary, is principally a strategy for framing your own argument. In writing a synthesis, you are conveying to your readers how various points of view in a conversation intersect and diverge. The larger point of this exercise is to find your own issue—your own position in the conversation—and make your argument for it.

### Steps to Writing a Synthesis

- 1 Make connections between and among different texts.** Annotate the texts you are working with, with an eye to comparing them. As you would for a summary, note major points in the texts, choose relevant examples, and formulate the gist of each text.
- 2 Decide what those connections mean.** Fill out a worksheet to compare your notes on the different texts, track counterarguments, and record your thoughts. Decide what the similarities



and differences mean to you and what they might mean to your readers.

- 3 Formulate the gist of what you've read.** Identify an overarching idea that brings together the ideas you've noted, and write a synthesis that forges connections and makes use of the examples you've noted. Use transitions to signal the direction of your synthesis.

### A Practice Sequence: Writing a Synthesis

- 1** To practice the strategies for synthesizing that we describe in this chapter, read the following three essays, which focus on the role that electronic media play in conveying information to diverse groups of readers or viewers. As you discuss the strategies the authors use to develop their arguments, consider these questions:

- How would you explain the popularity of blogs, Twitter, and YouTube?
- What themes have the writers focused on as they have sought to enter the conversation surrounding the use of electronic media?
- To what extent do you think the criticisms of new media presented by the authors are legitimate?
- Do blogs, Twitter, and YouTube pose a threat to traditional journalism?
- Do you think that blogs, Twitter, and YouTube add anything to print journalism? If so, what?

- 2** To stimulate a conversation, or a debate, we suggest that you break up into four different groups:

*Group 1:* Print journalism

*Group 2:* Blogs

*Group 3:* Twitter

*Group 4:* YouTube

Students in each group should prepare an argument indicating the strengths and limitations of the particular mode of communication that they represent. In preparing the argument, be sure to acknowledge what other modes of communication might add to the ways we learn about news and opinions. One student from each group will present this argument to the other groups.

- 3** Based on the discussion you have had in exercise 1 and/or exercise 2, write a synthesis of the three essays using the steps we have outlined in this chapter:

- Summarize each essay.
- Explain the ways in which the authors' arguments are similar or different, using examples and illustrations to demonstrate the similarities and differences.
- Formulate an overall gist that synthesizes the points each author makes.

### DAN KENNEDY

#### Political Blogs: Teaching Us Lessons About Community

Dan Kennedy, an assistant professor of journalism at Northeastern University, writes on media issues for *The Guardian* and for *CommonWealth* magazine. His blog, *Media Nation*, is online at [medianation.blogspot.com](http://medianation.blogspot.com).

The rise of blogging as both a supplement and a challenge to traditional journalism has coincided with an explosion of opinion mongering. Blogs—and the role they play in how Americans consume and respond to information—are increasingly visible during our political season, when our ideological divide is most apparent. From nakedly partisan sites such as *Daily Kos* on the left and *Little Green Footballs* on the right, to more nuanced but nevertheless ideological enterprises such as *Talking Points Memo*, it sometimes seems there is no room in blogworld for straight, neutral journalism.

The usual reasons given for this are that reporting is difficult and expensive and that few bloggers know how to research a story, develop and interview sources, and assemble the pieces into a coherent, factual narrative. Far easier, so this line of thinking goes, for bloggers to sit in their pajamas and blast their semi-informed opinions out to the world.

There is some truth to this, although embracing this view wholeheartedly requires us to overlook the many journalists who are now writing blogs, as well as the many bloggers who are producing journalism to a greater or lesser degree. But we make a mistake when we look at the opinion-oriented nature of blogs and ask whether bloggers are capable of being “objective,” to use a hoary and now all but meaningless word. The better question to ask is why opinion-oriented blogs are so popular—and

what lessons the traditional media can learn from them without giving up their journalistic souls.

Perhaps what's happening is that the best and more popular blogs provide a sense of community that used to be the lifeblood of traditional news organizations and, especially, of newspapers. Recently I reread part of Jay Rosen's book, *What Are Journalists For?*, his 1999 postmortem on the public journalism movement. What struck me was Rosen's description of public journalism's origins, which were grounded in an attempt to recreate a sense of community so that people might discover a reason to read newspapers. "Eventually I came to the conclusion . . . that journalism's purpose was to see the public into fuller existence," Rosen writes. "Informing people followed that."

Rosen's thesis—that journalism could only be revived by reawakening the civic impulse—is paralleled by Robert Putnam's 2000 book, *Bowling Alone*, in which he found that people who sign petitions, attend public meetings, and participate in religious and social organizations are more likely to be newspaper readers than those who do not. "Newspaper readers are older, more educated, and more rooted in their communities than is the average American," Putnam writes.

Unfortunately for the newspaper business, the traditional idea of community, based mainly on geography, remains as moribund today as it was when Rosen and Putnam were analyzing its pathologies. But if old-fashioned communities are on the decline, the human impulse to form communities is not. And the Internet, as it turns out, is an ideal medium for fostering a new type of community in which people have never met, and may not even know each other's real names, but share certain views and opinions about the way the world works. It's interesting that Rosen has become a leading exponent of journalism tied to these communities, both through his PressThink blog and through NewAssignment.net, which fosters collaborations between professional and citizen journalists.

## Attitude First, Facts Second

This trend toward online community-building has given us a mediascape in which many people—especially those most interested in politics and public affairs—want the news delivered to them in the context of their attitudes and beliefs. That doesn't mean they want to be fed a diet of self-reinforcing agit-prop (although some do). It does mean they see their news consumption as something that takes place within their community, to be fit into a pre-existing framework of ideas that may be challenged but that must be acknowledged.

Earlier this year John Lloyd, a contributing editor for the *Financial Times*, talked about the decline of just-the-facts journalism on *Open Source*, a Web-based radio program hosted by the veteran journalist Christopher Lydon. It has become increasingly difficult, Lloyd said, to report facts that are not tied to an ideological point of view. The emerging paradigm, he explained, may be "that you can only get facts through by attaching them to a very strong left-wing, right-wing, Christian, atheist position. Only then, only if you establish your bona fides within this particular community, will they be open to facts."

No less a blogging enthusiast than Markos Moulitsas, founder of Daily Kos, has observed that political blogs are a nonentity in Britain, where the newspapers themselves cater to a wide range of different opinions. "You look at the media in Britain, it's vibrant and it's exciting and it's fun, because they're all ideologically tinged," Moulitsas said at an appearance in Boston last fall. "And that's a good thing, because people buy them and understand that their viewpoints are going to be represented."

The notion that journalism must be tied to an ideological community may seem disheartening to traditionalists. In practice, though, journalism based on communities of shared interests and beliefs can be every bit as valuable as the old model of objectivity, if approached with rigor and respect for the truth.

Last year, for instance, Talking Points Memo (TPM) and its related blogs helped break the story of how the U.S. Department of Justice had fired eight U.S. attorneys for what appeared to be politically motivated reasons, a scandal that led to the resignation of Attorney General Alberto Gonzales. TPM's reporting was based in part on information dug up and passed along by its liberal readership. The founder and editor, Joshua Micah Marshall, received a George Polk Award, but it belonged as much to the community he had assembled as it did to him personally.

Of course, we still need neutral, non-opinionated journalism to help us make sense of the world around us. TPM's coverage of the U.S. attorneys scandal was outstanding, but it was also dismissive of arguments that it was much ado about nothing, or that previous administrations had done the same or worse. Liberals or conservatives who get all of their news from ideologically friendly sources don't have much incentive to change their minds.

## Connecting to Communities of Shared Interests

Even news outlets that excel at traditional, "objective" journalism do so within the context of a community. Some might not find liberal bias in the news pages of the *New York Times*, as the paper's conservative critics



would contend, but there's little doubt that the *Times* serves a community of well educated, affluent, culturally liberal readers whose preferences and tastes must be taken into account. Not to be a journalistic relativist, but all news needs to be evaluated within the context in which it was produced, even an old-fashioned, inverted-pyramid-style dispatch from the wires. Who was interviewed? Who wasn't? Why? These are questions that must be asked regardless of the source.

We might now be coming full circle as placeblogs—chatty, conversational blogs that serve a particular geographic community—become more prevalent. Lisa Williams, founder of H2otown, a blog that serves her community of Watertown, Massachusetts, believes that such forums could help foster the sense of community that is a necessary precondition to newspaper readership. Williams also runs a project called Placeblogger.com, which tracks local blogs around the world.

"The news creates a shared pool of stories that gives us a way to talk to people who aren't family or close friends or people who we will never meet—in short, our fellow citizens," Williams says by e-mail. "The truth is, people still want those neighbor-to-neighbor contacts, but the traditional ways of doing it don't fit into the lives that people are actually living today. Your core audience is tired, sitting on the couch with their laptop, and watching *Lost* with one eye. Give them someone to sit with."

Critics of blogs have been looking at the wrong thing. While traditionalists disparage bloggers for their indulgence of opinion and hyperbole, they overlook the sense of community and conversation that blogs have fostered around the news. What bloggers do well, and what news organizations do poorly or not at all, is give their readers someone to sit with. News consumers—the public, citizens, us—still want the truth. But we also want to share it and talk about it with our like-minded neighbors and friends. The challenge for journalism is not that we'll lose our objectivity; it's that we won't find a way to rebuild a sense of community.

## JOHN DICKERSON

### Don't Fear Twitter

John Dickerson is *Slate* magazine's chief political correspondent and a political analyst for CBS News. Before joining *Slate*, Dickerson covered politics for *Time* magazine, including four years as the magazine's White House correspondent. Dickerson has also written for the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* and is a regular panelist on *Washington Week in Review*. This essay first appeared in the Summer 2008 issue of *Nieman Reports*.

If I were cleverer, this piece on Twitter and journalism would fit in Twitter's 140-character limitation. The beauty of Twitter when properly used—by both the reader and the writer—is that everyone knows what it is. No reader expects more from Twitter than it offers, and no one writing tries to shove more than necessary into a Twitter entry, which is sometimes called a Tweet, but not by me, thank you.

Not many people know what Twitter is, though, so I'm going to go on for a few hundred words. Twitter is a Web site that allows you to share your thoughts instantly and on any topic with other people in the Twitter network as long as you do so in tight little entries of 140 characters or less. If you're wondering how much you can write with that space limitation, this sentence that you're reading right now hits that mark perfectly.

For some, journalism is already getting smaller. Newspapers are shrinking. Serious news is being pushed aside in favor of entertainment and fluff stories. To many journalists and guardians of the trade, the idea that any journalist would willingly embrace a smaller space is horrifying and dumb. One journalism professor drew himself up to his full height and denounced Twitter journalism—or microjournalism, as someone unfortunately called it—as the ultimate absurd reduction of journalism. (I think he may have dislodged his monocle, he was waving his quill pen so violently.) Venerable CBS newsman Roger Mudd had a far lighter touch when he joked to me that he could barely say the word "texting" when he and I were talking about the idea of delivering a couple of sentences and calling it journalism.

We can all agree that journalism shouldn't get any smaller, but Twitter doesn't threaten the traditions of our craft. It adds, rather than subtracts, from what we do.

As I spend nearly all of my time on the road these days reporting on the presidential campaigns, Twitter is the perfect place for all of those asides I've scribbled in the hundreds of notebooks I have in my garage from the campaigns and stories I've covered over the years. Inside each of those notebooks are little pieces of color I've picked up along the way. Sometimes these snippets are too off-topic or too inconsequential to work into a story. Sometimes they are the little notions or sideways thoughts that become the lead of a piece or the kicker. All of them now have found a home on Twitter.

As journalists we take people places they can't go. Twitter offers a little snapshot way to do this. It's informal and approachable and great for conveying a little moment from an event. Here's an entry from a McCain rally during the Republican primaries: "Weare, NH: Audience man to McCain: 'I heard that Hershey is moving plants to Mexico and I'll be damned if I'm going to eat Mexican chocolate.'" In Scranton covering Barack Obama I sent this: "Obama: 'What's John McCain's problem?' Audience member: 'He's too old.' Obama: 'No, no that's not the problem. There are a lot of

wise people. . . .” With so many Democrats making an issue of McCain’s age, here was the candidate in the moment seeming to suggest that critique was unfair.

Occasionally, just occasionally, reporters can convey a piece of news that fits into 140 characters without context. If Twitter had been around when the planes hit the World Trade Center, it would have been a perfect way for anyone who witnessed it to convey at that moment what they’d seen or heard. With Twitter, we can also pull back the curtain on our lives a little and show readers what it’s like to cover a campaign. (“Wanna be a reporter? On long bus rides learn to sleep in your own hand.”)

The risk for journalism, of course, is that people spend all day Twittering and reading other people’s Twitter entries and don’t engage with the news in any other way. This seems a pretty small worry. If written the right way, Twitter entries build a community of readers who find their way to longer articles because they are lured by these moment-by-moment observations. As a reader, I’ve found that I’m exposed to a wider variety of news because I read articles suggested to me by the wide variety of people I follow on Twitter. I’m also exposed to some keen political observers and sharp writers who have never practiced journalism.

Twitter is not the next great thing in journalism. No one should try to make Twitter do more than it can and no reader should expect too much from a 140-character entry. As for the critics, their worries about Twitter and journalism seem like the kind of obtuse behavior that would make a perfect observational Twitter entry: “A man at the front of the restaurant is screaming at a waiter and gesticulating wildly. The snacks on the bar aren’t a four-course meal!”

STEVE GROVE

## YouTube: The Flattening of Politics

Steve Grove directs all news, political programming, and citizen journalism for YouTube. He has been quoted as saying that he regards himself less as an editor than as a curator of the Web site’s “chaotic sea of content.” A native of Northfield, Minnesota, he worked as a journalist at the *Boston Globe* and ABC News before moving to YouTube.

For a little over a year, I’ve served as YouTube’s news and political director—perhaps a perplexing title in the eyes of many journalists. Such wonderment might be expected since YouTube gained its early notoriety as a place with videos of dogs on skateboards or kids falling off of trampolines. But these days, in the 10 hours of video uploaded to

YouTube every minute of every day (yes—every minute of every day), an increasing amount of the content is news and political video. And with YouTube’s global reach and ease of use, it’s changing the way that politics—and its coverage—is happening.

Each of the 16 one-time presidential candidates had YouTube channels; seven announced their candidacies on YouTube. Their staffs uploaded thousands of videos that were viewed tens of millions of times. By early March of this year, the Obama campaign was uploading two to three videos to YouTube every day. And thousands of advocacy groups and nonprofit organizations use YouTube to get their election messages into the conversation. For us, the most exciting aspect is that ordinary people continue to use YouTube to distribute their own political content; these range from “gotcha” videos they’ve taken at campaign rallies to questions for the candidates, from homemade political commercials to video mash-ups of mainstream media coverage.

What this means is that average citizens are able to fuel a new meritocracy for political coverage, one unburdened by the gatekeeping “middleman.” Another way of putting it is that YouTube is now the world’s largest town hall for political discussion, where voters connect with candidates—and the news media—in ways that were never before possible.

In this new media environment, politics is no longer bound by traditional barriers of time and space. It doesn’t matter what time it is, or where someone is located—as long as they have the means to connect through the Web, they can engage in the discussion. This was highlighted in a pair of presidential debates we produced with CNN during this election cycle during which voters asked questions of the candidates via YouTube videos they’d submitted online. In many ways, those events simply brought to the attention of a wider audience the sort of exchanges that take place on YouTube all the time. . . .

## News Organizations and YouTube

Just because candidates and voters find all sorts of ways to connect directly on YouTube does not mean there isn’t room for the mainstream media, too. In fact, many news organizations have launched YouTube channels, including the Associated Press, the *New York Times*, the BBC, CBS, and the *Wall Street Journal*.

Why would a mainstream media company upload their news content to YouTube?

Simply put, it’s where eyeballs are going. Research from the Pew Internet & American Life project found that 37 percent of adult Internet users have watched online video news, and well over half of online adults have used the Internet to watch video of any kind. Each day on YouTube hundreds of millions of videos are viewed at the same time that television viewership is decreasing in many markets. If a mainstream news



organization wants its political reporting seen, YouTube offers visibility without a cost. The ones that have been doing this for a while rely on a strategy of building audiences on YouTube and then trying to drive viewers back to their Web sites for a deeper dive into the content. And these organizations can earn revenue as well by running ads against their video content on YouTube.

In many ways, YouTube's news ecosystem has the potential to offer much more to a traditional media outlet. Here are some examples:

1. **Interactivity:** YouTube provides an automatic focus group for news content. How? YouTube wasn't built as merely a "series of tubes" to distribute online video. It is also an interactive platform. Users comment on, reply to, rank, and share videos with one another and form communities around content that they like. If news organizations want to see how a particular piece of content will resonate with audiences, they have an automatic focus group waiting on YouTube. And that focus group isn't just young people: 20 percent of YouTube users are over age 55—which is the same percentage that is under 18. This means the YouTube audience roughly mirrors the national population.
2. **Partner with Audiences:** YouTube provides news media organizations new ways to engage with audiences and involve them in the programming. Modeled on the presidential debates we cohosted last year, YouTube has created similar partnerships, such as one with the BBC around the mayoral election in London and with a large public broadcaster in Spain for their recent presidential election. Also on the campaign trail, we worked along with Hearst affiliate WMUR-TV in New Hampshire to solicit videos from voters during that primary. Hundreds of videos flooded in from across the state. The best were broadcast on that TV station, which highlighted this symbiotic relationship: On the Web, online video bubbles the more interesting content to the top and then TV amplifies it on a new scale. We did similar arrangements with news organizations in Iowa, Pennsylvania, and on Super Tuesday, as news organizations leveraged the power of voter-generated content. What the news organizations discover is that they gain audience share by offering a level of audience engagement—with opportunities for active as well as passive experiences.

For news media organizations, audience engagement is much easier to achieve by using platforms like YouTube than it is to do on their own. And we just made it easier: Our open API (application programming interface), nicknamed "YouTube Everywhere"—just launched a few months ago—allows other companies to integrate our upload functionality into their online platforms. It's like having a mini YouTube on your

Web site and, once it's there, news organizations can encourage—and publish—video responses and comments on the reporting they do.

Finally, reporters use YouTube as source material for their stories. With hundreds of thousands of video cameras in use today, there is a much greater chance than ever before that events will be captured—by someone—as they unfold. No need for driving the satellite truck to the scene if someone is already there and sending in video of the event via their cell phone. It's at such intersections of new and old media that YouTube demonstrates its value. It could be argued, in fact, that the YouTube platform is the new frontier in newsgathering. On the election trail, virtually every appearance by every candidate is captured on video—by someone—and that means the issues being talked about are covered more robustly by more people who can steer the public discussion in new ways. The phenomenon is, of course, global, as we witnessed last fall in Burma (Myanmar) after the government shut down news media outlets during waves of civic protests. In time, YouTube was the only way to track the violence being exercised by the government on monks who'd taken to the streets. Videos of this were seen worldwide on YouTube, creating global awareness of this situation—even in the absence of journalists on the scene.

Citizen journalism on YouTube—and other Internet sources—is often criticized because it is produced by amateurs and therefore lacks a degree of trustworthiness. Critics add that because platforms like YouTube are fragmenting today's media environment, traditional newsrooms are being depleted of journalists, and thus the denominator for quality news coverage is getting lower and lower. I share this concern about what is happening in the news media today, but I think there are a couple of things worth remembering when it comes to news content on YouTube.

## Trusting What We See

When it comes to determining the trustworthiness of news content on YouTube, it's important to have some context. People tend to know what they're getting on YouTube, since content is clearly labeled by username as to where it originated. A viewer knows if the video they're watching is coming from "jellybean109" or "thenewyorktimes." Users also know that YouTube is an open platform and that no one verifies the truth of content better than the consumer. The wisdom of the crowd on YouTube is far more likely to pick apart a shoddy piece of "journalism" than it is to elevate something that is simply untrue. In fact, because video is ubiquitous and so much more revealing and compelling than text, YouTube can provide a critical fact-checking platform in today's media environment. And in some ways, it offers a backstop for accuracy since a journalist

can't afford to get the story wrong; if they do, it's likely that someone else who was there got it right—and posted it to YouTube.

Scrutiny cuts both ways. Journalists are needed today for the work they do as much as they ever have been. While the wisdom of crowds might provide a new form of fact checking, and the ubiquity of technology might provide a more robust view of the news, citizens desperately need the Fourth Estate to provide depth, context, and analysis that only comes with experience and the sharpening of the craft. Without the work of journalists, the citizens—the electorate—lose a critical voice in the process of civic decision-making.

This is the media ecosystem in which we live in this election cycle. Candidates and voters speak directly to one another, unfiltered. News organizations use the Internet to connect with and leverage audiences in new ways. Activists, issue groups, campaigns, and voters all advocate for, learn about, and discuss issues on the same level platform. YouTube has become a major force in this new media environment by offering new opportunities and new challenges. For those who have embraced them—and their numbers grow rapidly every day—the opportunity to influence the discussion is great. For those who haven't, they ignore the opportunity at their own peril.

## AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Whether you paraphrase, summarize, or synthesize, it is essential that you acknowledge your sources. Academic writing requires you to use and document sources appropriately, making clear to readers the boundaries between your words and ideas and those of other writers. Setting boundaries can be a challenge because so much of academic writing involves interweaving the ideas of others into your own argument. Still, no matter how difficult, you must acknowledge your sources. It's only fair. Imagine how you would feel if you were reading a text and discovered that the writer had incorporated a passage from one of your papers, something you slaved over, without giving you credit. You would see yourself as a victim of plagiarism, and you would be justified in feeling very angry indeed.

In fact, **plagiarism**—the unacknowledged use of another's work, passed off as one's own—is a most serious breach of academic integrity, and colleges and universities deal with it severely. If you are caught plagiarizing in your work for a class, you can expect to fail that class and may even be expelled from your college or university. Furthermore, although a failing grade on a paper or in a course, honestly come by, is unlikely to deter an employer from hiring you, the stigma of plagiarism can come back to haunt you when you apply for a job. Any violation of the principles set forth in Table 7.1 could have serious consequences for your academic and professional career.

TABLE 7.1 Principles Governing Plagiarism

1. All written work submitted for any purpose is accepted as your own work. This means it must not have been written even in part by another person.
2. The wording of any written work you submit is assumed to be your own. This means you must not submit work that has been copied, wholly or partially, from a book, an article, an essay, a newspaper, another student's paper or notebook, or any other source. Another writer's phrases, sentences, or paragraphs can be included only if they are presented as quotations and the source acknowledged.
3. The ideas expressed in a paper or report are assumed to originate with you, the writer. Written work that paraphrases a source without acknowledgment must not be submitted for credit. Ideas from the work of others can be incorporated in your work as starting points, governing issues, illustrations, and the like, but in every instance the source must be cited.
4. Remember that any online materials you use to gather information for a paper are also governed by the rules for avoiding plagiarism. You need to learn to cite electronic sources as well as printed and other sources.
5. You may correct and revise your writing with the aid of reference books. You also may discuss your writing with your peers in a writing group or with peer tutors at your campus writing center. However, you may not submit writing that has been revised substantially by another person.

Even if you know what plagiarism is and wouldn't think about doing it, you can still plagiarize unintentionally. Again, paraphrasing can be especially tricky: Attempting to restate a passage without using the original words and sentence structure is, to a certain extent, an invitation to plagiarism. If you remember that your paper is *your* argument, and understand that any paraphrasing, summarizing, or synthesizing should reflect *your* voice and style, you will be less likely to have problems with plagiarism. Your paper should sound like you. And, again, the surest way to protect yourself is to cite your sources.

### Steps to Avoiding Plagiarism

- 1 Always cite the source. Signal that you are paraphrasing, summarizing, or synthesizing by identifying your source at the outset — “According to James Gunn,” “Clive Thompson argues,” “Cynthia Haven and Josh Keller . . . point out.” And if possible, indicate the end of the paraphrase, summary, or synthesis with relevant page references to the source. If you cite a source several times in your paper, don't assume that your first citation has you covered; acknowledge the source as often as you use it.
- 2 Provide a full citation in your bibliography. It's not enough to cite a source in your paper; you must also provide a full citation for every source you use in the list of sources at the end of your paper.



## INTEGRATING QUOTATIONS INTO YOUR WRITING

When you integrate quotations into your writing, bear in mind a piece of advice we've given you about writing the rest of your paper: Take your readers by the hand and lead them step-by-step. When you quote other authors to develop your argument—using their words to support your thinking or to address a counterargument—discuss and analyze the words you quote, showing readers how the specific language of each quotation contributes to the larger point you are making in your essay. When you integrate quotations, then, there are three basic things you want to do: (1) Take an active stance, (2) explain the quotations, and (3) attach short quotations to your own sentences.

### ■ Take an Active Stance

Critical reading requires that you adopt an active stance toward what you read—that you raise questions in response to a text. You should be no less active when you are using other authors' texts to develop your own argument.

Taking an active stance when you are quoting means knowing when to quote. Don't quote when a paraphrase or summary will convey the information from a source more effectively. More important, you have to make fair and wise decisions about what and how much you should quote to make your argument.

- It's not fair (or wise) to quote selectively—choosing only passages that support your argument—when you know you are distorting the argument of the writer you are quoting. You want to show that you understand the writer's argument, and you want to make evenhanded use of it in your own argument.
- It's not wise (or fair to yourself) to flesh out your paper with an overwhelming number of quotations that could make readers think that you do not know your topic well or do not have your own ideas. Don't allow quotations to take over your paragraphs. Remember that your ideas and argument—your thesis—are what is most important to the readers and what justifies a quotation's being included at all.

Above all, taking an active stance when you quote means taking control of your writing. You want to establish your own argument and guide your readers through it, allowing sources to contribute to but not dictate its direction. You are responsible for plotting and pacing your essay. Always keep in mind that your thesis is the skewer that runs through every paragraph, holding all of the ideas together. When you use quotations, then, you must organize them to enrich, substantiate, illustrate, and help support your central claim or thesis.

### ■ Explain the Quotations

When you quote an author to support or advance your argument, make sure that readers know exactly what they should learn from the quotation.

Read the excerpt below from one student's early draft of an argument that focuses on the value of service learning in high schools. The student reviews several relevant studies—but then simply drops in a quotation, expecting readers to know what they should pay attention to in it.

Other research emphasizes community service as an integral and integrated part of moral identity. In this understanding, community service activities are not isolated events but are woven into the context of students' everyday lives (Yates, 1995); the personal, the moral, and the civic become "inseparable" (Colby, Ehrlich, Beaumont, & Stephens, 2003, p. 15). In their study of minority high schoolers at an urban Catholic school who volunteered at a soup kitchen for the homeless as part of a class assignment, Youniss and Yates (1999) found that the students underwent significant identity changes, coming to perceive themselves as lifelong activists. The researchers' findings are worth quoting at length here because they depict the dramatic nature of the students' changed viewpoints. Youniss and Yates wrote:

Many students abandoned an initially negative view of homeless people and a disinterest in homelessness by gaining appreciation of the humanity of homeless people and by showing concern for homelessness in relation to poverty, job training, low-cost housing, prison reform, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, care for the mentally ill, quality urban education, and welfare policy. Several students also altered perceptions of themselves from politically impotent teenagers to involved citizens who now and in the future could use their talent and power to correct social problems. They projected articulated pictures of themselves as adult citizens who could affect housing policies, education for minorities, and government programs within a clear framework of social justice. (p. 362)

The student's introduction to the quoted passage provided a rationale for quoting Youniss and Yates at length, but it did not help her readers see how the research related to her argument. The student needed to frame the quotation for her readers. Instead of introducing the quotation by saying "Youniss and Yates wrote," she should have made clear that the study supports the argument that community service can create change. A more appropriate frame for the quotation might have been a summary like this one:

*Frames the quotations, explaining it in the context of the student's argument.*

One particular study underscores my argument that service can motivate change, particularly when that change begins within the students who are involved in service. Youniss and Yates (1999) wrote that over the course of their research, the

students developed both an “appreciation of the humanity of homeless people” and a sense that they would someday be able to “use their talent and power to correct social problems” (p. 362).

In the following example, notice that the student writer uses Derrick Bell’s text to say something about how the effects of desegregation have been muted by political manipulation.\* The writer shapes what he wants readers to focus on, leaving nothing to chance.

The effectiveness with which the meaning of *Brown v. Board of Education* has been manipulated, Derrick Bell argued, is also evidenced by the way in which such thinking has actually been embraced by minority groups. Bell claimed that a black school board member’s asking “But of what value is it to teach black children to read in all-black schools?” indicates this unthinking acceptance that whiteness is an essential ingredient to effective schooling for blacks. Bell continued:

The assumption that even the attaining of academic skills is worthless unless those skills are acquired in the presence of white students illustrates dramatically how a legal precedent, namely the Supreme Court’s decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*, has been so constricted even by advocates that its goal — equal educational opportunity — is rendered inaccessible, even unwanted, unless it can be obtained through racial balancing of the school population. (p. 255)

Bell’s argument is extremely compelling, particularly when one considers the extent to which “racial balancing” has come to be defined in terms of large white majority populations and small nonwhite minority populations.

Notice that the student’s last sentence helps readers understand what the quoted material suggests and why it’s important by embedding and extending Bell’s notion of racial balancing into his explanation.

In sum, you should always explain the information that you quote so that your readers can see how the quotation relates to your own argument. (“Take your readers by the hand . . .”) As you read other people’s writing, keep an eye open to the ways writers introduce and explain the sources they use to build their arguments.

### ■ Attach Short Quotations to Your Sentences

The quotations we discussed above are **block quotations**, lengthy quotations of more than five lines that are set off from the text of a paper with

\*This quotation is from Derrick Bell’s *Silent Covenants: Brown v. Board of Education and the Unfulfilled Hopes for Racial Reform* (New York: Oxford UP, 2005).

indentation. Make shorter quotations part of your own sentences so that your readers can **understand** how the quotations connect to your argument and can **follow along easily**. How do you make a quotation part of your own sentences? There are two main methods:

- Integrate quotations within the grammar of your writing.
- Attach quotations with punctuation.

If possible, use both to make your integration of quotations more interesting and varied.

**Integrate quotations within the grammar of a sentence.** When you integrate a quotation into a sentence, the quotation must make grammatical sense and read as if it is part of the sentence:

Fine, Weiss, and Powell (1998) expanded upon what others call “equal status contact theory” by using a “framework that draws on three traditionally independent literatures — those on community, difference, and democracy” (p. 37).

If you add words to the quotation, use square brackets around them to let readers know that the words are not original to the quotation:

Smith and Wellner (2002) asserted that they “are not alone [in believing] that the facts have been incorrectly interpreted by Mancini” (p. 24).

If you omit any words in the middle of a quotation, use an **ellipsis**, three periods with spaces between them, to indicate the omission:

Riquelme argues that “Eliot tries . . . to provide a definition by negations, which he also turns into positive terms that are meant to correct misconceptions” (156).

If you omit a sentence or more, make sure to put a period before the ellipsis points:

Eagleton writes, “What Eliot was in fact assaulting was the whole ideology of middle-class liberalism. . . . Eliot’s own solution is an extreme right-wing authoritarianism: men and women must sacrifice their petty ‘personalities’ and opinions to an impersonal order” (39).

Whatever you add (using square brackets) or omit (using ellipses), the sentence must read grammatically. And, of course, your additions and omissions must not distort the author’s meaning.

**Attach quotations with punctuation.** You also can attach a quotation to a sentence by using punctuation. For example, this passage attaches the run-in quotation with a colon:

For these researchers, there needs to be recognition of differences in a way that will include and accept all students. Specifically, they asked: “Within multiracial settings, when are young people invited to discuss, voice, critique, and re-view the



very notions of race that feel so fixed, so hierarchical, so damaging, and so accepted in the broader culture?" (p. 132).

In conclusion, if you don't connect quotations to your argument, your readers may not understand why you've included them. You need to explain a significant point that each quotation reveals as you introduce or end it. This strategy helps readers know what to pay attention to in a quotation, particularly if the quotation is lengthy.

### Steps to Integrating Quotations into Your Writing

- 1 **Take an active stance.** Your sources should contribute to your argument, not dictate its direction.
- 2 **Explain the quotations.** Explain what you quote so your readers understand how each quotation relates to your argument.
- 3 **Attach short quotations to your sentences.** Integrate short quotations within the grammar of your own sentences, or attach them with appropriate punctuation.

### A Practice Sequence: Integrating Quotations

- 1 Using several of the sources you are working with in developing your paper, try integrating quotations into your essay. Be sure you are controlling your sources. Carefully read the paragraphs where you've used quotations. Will your readers clearly understand why the quotations are there — the points the quotations support? Do the sentences with quotations read smoothly? Are they grammatically correct?
- 2 Working in a small group, agree on a substantial paragraph or passage (from this book or some other source) to write about. Each member should read the passage and take a position on the ideas, and then draft a page that quotes the passage using both strategies for integrating these quotations. Compare what you've written, examining similarities and differences in the use of quotations.

## AN ANNOTATED STUDENT RESEARCHED ARGUMENT: SYNTHESIZING SOURCES

The student who wrote the essay "A Greener Approach to Groceries: Community-Based Agriculture in LaSalle Square" did so in a first-year writing class that gave students the opportunity to do service in the local

community. For this assignment, students were asked to explore debates about community and citizenship in contemporary America and to focus their research and writing on a social justice-related issue of their choice. The context of the course guided their inquiry as all the students in the course explored community service as a way to engage meaningfully and to develop relationships in the community.

We have annotated her essay to show the ways that she summarized and paraphrased research to show the urgency of the problem of food insecurity that exists around the world and to offer possible solutions. Notice how she synthesizes her sources, taking an active stance in using what she has read to advance her own argument.

Nancy Paul  
Professor McLaughlin  
English 2102  
May 11, 20—

Paul 1

#### A Greener Approach to Groceries:

##### Community-Based Agriculture in LaSalle Square

In our post-9/11 society, there is incessant concern for the security of our future. Billions of dollars are spent tightening borders, installing nuclear detectors, and adjudicating safety measures so that the citizens of the United States can grow and prosper without fear. Unfortunately, for some urban poor, the threat from terrorism is minuscule compared to the cruelty of their immediate environment. Far from the sands of the Afghan plains and encapsulated in the midst of inner-city deterioration, many find themselves in gray-lot deserts devoid of vegetation and reliable food sources. Abandoned by corporate supermarkets, millions of Americans are maimed by a "food insecurity" — the nutritional poverty that cripples them developmentally, physically, and psychologically.

*The student's thesis*

The midwestern city that surrounds our university has a food-desert sitting just west of the famously lush campus. Known as LaSalle Square, it was once home to the lucrative Bendix plant and has featured both a Target and a Kroger supermarket in recent years. But previous economic development decisions have driven both stores to the outskirts of town, and without a local supplier, the only food available in the neighborhood is prepackaged and sold at the few small convenience stores. This available food is virtually devoid of nutrition and

*She calls attention to both the immediacy and urgency of the problem*

Paul 2

inhibits the ability of the poor to prosper and thrive. Thus, an aging strip mall, industrial site, and approximately three acres of an empty grass lot between the buildings anchor — and unfortunately define — the neighborhood.

*She proposes a possible solution.*

While there are multiple ways of providing food to the destitute, I am proposing a co-op of community gardens built on the grassy space in LaSalle Square and on smaller sites within the neighborhood, supplemented by extra crops from Michiana farmers, which would supply fresh fruit and vegetables to be sold or distributed to the poor. Together the co-op could meet the nutritional needs of the people, provide plenty of nutritious food, not cost South Bend any additional money, and contribute to neighborhood revitalization, yielding concrete increases in property values. Far from being a pipe dream, LaSalle Square already hosted an Urban Garden Market this fall, so a co-op would simply build upon the already recognized need and desire for healthy food in the area. Similar coalitions around the world are harnessing the power of community to remedy food insecurity without the aid of corporate enterprise, and South Bend is perfectly situated to reproduce and possibly exceed their successes.

*She places her solution in a larger context to indicate its viability.*

Many, myself previously included, believe that the large-volume, cheap industrialization of food and the welfare system have obliterated hunger in the United States. Supermarkets like Wal-Mart and Kroger seem ubiquitous in our communities, and it is difficult to imagine anyone being beyond their influence. However, profit-driven corporate business plans do not mix well with low-income, high-crime populations, and the gap between the two is growing wider. This polarization, combined with the vitamin deficiency of our high-fructose corn syrup society, has created food deserts in already struggling communities where malnutrition is the enemy *inconnu* of the urban poor.

LaSalle Square's food insecurity is typical of many urban areas. The grocery stores that used to serve the neighborhood have relocated to more attractive real estate on the outskirts of the city, and only local convenience stores, stocking basic necessary items and tobacco products, remain profitable. Linda Wolfson, a member of the steering committee for the LaSalle

*More context*

3

*Synthesizing helps illustrate the extent of the problem and bolster her view that the poor suffer the most from the problem she identifies (Garnett; Smith; Brown and Carter).*

4

*Here she paraphrases findings.*

5

Paul 3

Square Redevelopment Plan, notes that if the community was fiscally healthy, it would be reasonable to expect the inhabitants to simply drive the six miles to the strip mall district, but unfortunately many are marginally employed and do not have access to cars. For them, it is economically irresponsible to spend the extra money to get to the supermarket, and so they feed their families on the cheap soda, chips, and processed food that are readily available at the convenience store. Especially since high-calorie, low-nutrient, packaged food tends to be denser, urban mothers find that it helps their children feel full (Garnett). Sadly, a health investigation released in 2006 concluded that by the age of three, more than one-third of urban children are obese, due in large part to the consumption of low-quality food obtained from corner stores (Smith). A recent analysis of urban stores in Detroit found that only 19% offer the healthy food array suggested by the FDA food pyramid (Brown and Carter 5). The food that is offered contains 25% less nutrient density, and consequently, underprivileged socioeconomic populations consume significantly lower levels of the micronutrients that form the foundation for proper protein and brain development. In a recent study of poor households, it was found that two-thirds of children were nutritionally poor and that more than 25% of women were deficient in iron, vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin B6, thiamin, and riboflavin (Garnett). Of course, some may challenge the relevance of these vitamins and nutrients since they are not something the average person consciously incorporates into his or her diet on a daily basis. Yet modern research, examining the severely homogenous diets of the poor, has found severe developmental consequences associated with the lack of nutritional substance. For those afflicted, these deficiencies are not simply inconvenient, but actually exacerbate their plight and hinder their progress toward a sustainable lifestyle.

The human body is a complex system that cannot be sustained merely on the simple sugars and processed carbohydrates that comprise most cheap and filling foodstuffs, and research shows a relationship between nutritional deficiencies and a host of cognitive and developmental impairments that are prevalent

6



Paul 4

*Again she both summarizes and cites a relevant study to advance her argument.*

in the undernourished families from urban America. Standardized tests of impoverished siblings, one of whom received nutritional supplements and the other who did not, showed cognitive gains in the well-nourished child as well as increased motor skills and greater interest in social interactions when compared to the other child. In the highly formative toddler years, undernutrition can inhibit the myelination of nerve fibers, which is responsible for neurotransmitting and proper brain function. Collaborators Emily Tanner from the University of Oxford and Matia Finn-Stevenson from Yale University published a comprehensive analysis of the link between nutrition and brain development in 2002. Their analysis, which they linked to social policy, indicated that a shortage of legumes and leafy green vegetables, which are nearly impossible to find in corner stores, is the leading cause of the iron-deficiency anemia afflicting 25% of urban children. This extreme form of anemia is characterized by impaired neurotransmission, weaker memory, and reduced attention span (Tanner and Finn-Stevenson 186). For those who do not have access to the vitamins, minerals, and micronutrients found in fruits and vegetables, these maladies are not distant risks, but constant, inescapable threats.

In light of these severe consequences of undernutrition, the term “food insecurity” encapsulates the condition wherein the economically disadvantaged are vulnerable simply because their bodies are unable to receive adequate fuel for optimal functioning. Just as one cannot expect a dry, parched plant to bloom and pollinate a garden, by constraining the development of individuals, food insecurity also constrains the development of the neighborhoods in which the individuals contribute. For the health of a city and its communities, all roadblocks to progress must be removed, and food insecurity must be cut out at its roots so that individuals have the resources for advancement.

As socially conscious citizens and local governments have recognized the prevalence and danger of food insecurity in inner cities, there have been attempts at a remedy. Obviously, the easiest solution is simply to introduce a grocery store that would provide a variety of quality, healthful foods. However, for big-box supermarkets driven by the bottom line, urban areas are

*She takes an active stance in citing initiatives that could be applied more effectively to alleviate the problem of food insecurity.*

*She paraphrases a researcher's findings.*

Paul 5

less than desirable business locales from a standpoint of both profitability and maintenance. It is simply irrational for a supermarket to invest in an urban area with less revenue potential, size constraints, an unattractive locale, and an increased threat of theft and defacement when it is so easy to turn a profit in spacious and peaceful suburbia (Eisenhauer 131). Supermarkets must have significant incentive, beyond humanitarian ends, if they are to take the financial risk of entering a poor, urban marketplace.

Certain cities are using the power of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) districts to encourage supermarkets to invest in urban centers. Under these redevelopment laws, tax revenues from retail development or other commercial enterprises are devoted, for a specified number of years, to infrastructural improvement of the district (“TIF Reform”). This approach has been effective in enticing new businesses; in fact, the exterior growth around South Bend is the result of a TIF district established in the late 1980s. LaSalle Square is currently part of a TIF district, but there is discussion as to how the TIF monies should best be applied (Wolfson). It may be possible to use the power of the TIF to encourage another large retailer such as Kroger to establish a presence in the square, but a smaller enterprise may be a better option. Experts indicate that for the destitute and food-insecure, reliance on a corporate entity is not optimal. Elizabeth Eisenhauer, a researcher from the State University of New York, investigated the interplay between supermarkets and the urban poor; she concluded that large big-box stores lack a commitment to the communities they serve and can be relied on only when it is clear they will make a profit, which may or may not happen when TIF benefits expire (131). Even when a portion of proceeds is used in the community, the majority of the cash flow from a supermarket is going to a corporate headquarters elsewhere, not directly supporting the surrounding neighborhood. Likewise, while some employees may be local, the highest-salary management positions are generally given to outsiders, making the stores and their employees set apart, rather than integrated into the neighborhood (Eisenhauer 130). Certainly a supermarket in an urban area will greatly contribute

Paul 6

to the reduction of food insecurity, but it is not the only available option, and the city of South Bend is ripe for alternative solutions. The city is primed for a cooperative effort that could shift the paradigm for urban renewal from a quick, corporate solution, to a long-term enterprise built on community contributions and under local control.

*She cites a number of examples as evidence to demonstrate the viability of the solution she offers.*

Around the globe, many destitute urban areas have found the means to reverse nutritional poverty through a literal and figurative grassroots effort. In an effort to avoid packaged, convenience store food, neighbors in the Bronx, San Francisco, Los Angeles, London, and most successfully in Philadelphia, have been planting their own crops right in the heart of the city (Brown and Carter 3-4). Truly farming the food desert, coalitions that link community gardens, local farmers, and urban markets are providing healthy, sustainable food sources without a supermarket. Interestingly, in the process, such coalitions are generating jobs, increasing property value, and, in some cases, actually reversing the effects of poverty. The city of South Bend, uniquely situated in the breadbasket of the United States, is in the perfect position to launch a "greening" effort, modeled after the successes in other parts of the world, which would both solve the problem of food insecurity of LaSalle Square and invigorate the local economy.

While modern Americans have the tendency to think that food production should be, and always has been, industrialized, countries around the world, especially economically disadvantaged nations, are exemplifying the possibilities of local gardening efforts. Far removed from industrial farms, Cubans grow half their vegetables within the city; vacant land in Russian cities produces 80% of the nation's vegetables, and specifically in Moscow, 65% of families contribute to food production. Singapore has 10,000 urban farmers, and nearly half of the residents of Vancouver grow food in their gardens (Brown and Carter 10). These habits are not simply a novelty; rather, populations that garden tend to be healthier, eating six out of the fourteen vegetable categories more regularly than non-gardeners and also consuming fewer sweet and sugary foods per capita (Brown and Carter 13). These data, compiled by the North American Urban

*The use of multiple sources would make her case even stronger than using just one source of information, in this case Brown and Carter.*

Paul 7

Agriculture Committee, were synthesized from the *Journal of Public Health Policy* and the *Journal of Nutrition Education* and show the interrelatedness of nutritional access and availability to healthy personal choices. While these trends toward healthful lifestyles and gardening have been gaining ground slowly in the United States, when food insecurity and poverty take their toll, cities are finding that urban agriculture is an increasingly attractive and profitable alternative.

American communities have shown that creativity and collaboration can be quite effective at reversing food insecurity. The Garden Project of the Greater Lansing Food Bank has successfully combined gardening and Midwest access to local farms to bring food security to urban residents and senior citizens. Their eighteen community gardens and volunteers provide fresh fruits and vegetables year-round to low-income families, food pantries, the elderly, and social service organizations. Completely bypassing the commercial market, the Garden Project has trained 500 families to grow their own food in backyard plots so that they can always have healthy food in the midst of the city (Brown and Carter 1). The gardens are supplemented by a process known as "gleaning," in which volunteers harvest extra crops from local farmers that would otherwise go to waste, and deliver it to residents of subsidized housing ("Gleaning"). In 2008 alone, the Garden Project actively involved 2,500 individual gardeners and was able to provide over 250,000 pounds of produce from gleaning alone, plus the yields of the community plots that were used directly by the gardeners ("GLFB Facts"). This Lansing coalition serves over 5,000 individuals per month, yet only 4,400 reside under the poverty line in the LaSalle Square area (*City-Data.com*). If half of the inhabitants of LaSalle Square became engaged in the gardening effort, a similar collaboration could meet the needs of the region, and greater participation could yield an excess.

Similar efforts have demonstrated not only that inner-city food production is achievable but also that it can be cost-effective and self-sufficient, unlike a food bank. Frustrated by the inner-city downturn she describes as "an overgrown dog toilet," industrious London entrepreneur Julie Brown created a

10

*She synthesizes sources to make her point.*

11

12

13



Paul 8

*In this paragraph, she summarizes research to address the possible counterargument.*

community gardening company aimed at providing unmechanized, local, sustainable food. The company, Growing Communities, uses organic box gardens and small farms to supply more than 400 homes with weekly deliveries of organic fruits and vegetables. After a ten-year investment in local farmers and mini-gardens within the city, Growing Communities is now financially independent and generates over \$400,000 per year (Willis 53). Compelled by both capitalism and social concern, Brown's efforts have shown that community-supported agriculture not only is possible but can be profitable as well! Our own community agriculture program should not be an entrepreneurial endeavor, but Brown's work in London indicates that it need not be a financial burden to the city either. Rather, the co-op would be financially self-sufficient, with the potential to generate revenues and fiscal growth in the city.

There are environmental factors that make South Bend an even better place to launch a profitable community agriculture program than London. Chiefly, South Bend has many more farms in the immediate vicinity than Ms. Brown could ever have dreamed of in the U.K. While Brown was limited to 25 local farms within 100 miles of the city, South Bend has over 50 farms within 25 miles of LaSalle Square (*Local Harvest*). Offering a broader production base creates more potential for profits by decreasing transportation time and increasing product, thereby making it easier for a coalition to become financially self-sufficient in a shorter time frame than Ms. Brown's ten-year plan.

*She again cites research to address the counterargument.*

Urban Philadelphia has led the way in demonstrating the profitability of community solutions to food insecurity through an offshoot of the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS) known as Philadelphia Greens. Since the 1970s, this coalition has reclaimed parks, planted trees, and created community gardens, both to revitalize the neighborhood and to serve the nutritionally and economically poor. Through a process that plants trees, builds wooden fences, and gardens the more than 1,000 vacant lots of Philadelphia, PHS combines housing projects and reclaimed space to "green" and reinvigorate the neighborhood ("The Effects"). Since LaSalle Square is essentially a large empty grassy area at the moment, a community agricul-

14

*She summarizes a study and then paraphrases.*

15

Paul 9

tural co-op should turn this vacant lot and others in the neighborhood into community gardens, which would work in tandem with the gleaning from local farms. Similar to the Philadelphia project, these gardens would simultaneously yield produce and improve the appearance of the neighborhood.

One PHS project, in the New Kensington neighborhood of north Philadelphia, was the subject of a recent socioeconomic study conducted by the University of Pennsylvania's renowned Wharton School of Business. In the New Kensington area, PHS recently planted 480 new trees, cleaned 145 side yards, developed 217 vacant lots, and established 15 new community gardens. The effort was a model of the collaborative strategy between PHS and the local community development corporation, making it the ideal subject of the Wharton study. The findings, published in 2004, showed significant increases in property values around the PHS greening projects and were the first step in quantifying the fiscal returns of neighborhood greening beyond the qualitative benefits of remedying food insecurity. After analyzing the sales records of thousands of New Kensington homes between 1980 and 2003, the study reported that PHS greening had led to a \$4 million gain in property value from tree plantings alone and a \$12 million gain from vacant lot improvements. Simply greening a vacant lot increased nearby property values by as much as 30% ("Seeing Green"). While a supermarket might modestly improve property values for those immediately near the store, community greening involves multiple plots across an area, benefiting many more people and properties. The Wharton study showed that community greening would provide increases in the value of any property near a green space, up to multiple millions of dollars. The New Kensington neighborhood covers 1.4 square miles, which is approximately the size of LaSalle Square, so while the overall property values are lower simply because South Bend is a smaller city, the gains might be proportional (*City-Data.com*). It is reasonable to believe that cleaning up LaSalle Square and planting gardens would quantitatively benefit the fiscal situation of the city and increase assets of the homeowners while subsequently improving the quality of life over many acres.

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Paul 10

Certainly there are challenges to the sort of dynamical, community-based solution that I am proposing. Such an agricultural co-op hinges on the participation of the people it serves and cannot be successful without the dedicated support of the neighborhood. It could be noted that lower-income economic groups are less socially involved than their higher-income counterparts, and some might believe that they are unlikely to contribute to, or care about, a greening effort. Yet I believe that there is a distinction between political involvement and neighborhood interaction. Middle-class Americans are conscious of gas prices and the fluctuations of the stock market that affect their job security and ability to provide for their families; yet the unemployed poor without cars must rely on their neighborhoods to eke out a living. Their sustenance comes not from a salary, but from odd jobs, welfare, and the munificence of fate. The battle to put food on the table is more familiar to the poor than foreign conflict and is one that they fight every day. Therefore, while the poor are less inclined to vote or worry about governmental affairs because of the difficulties associated simply with daily living, they are acutely aware of their immediate surroundings and how those surroundings challenge or contribute to their success. This position makes them uniquely inclined to invest in the betterment of their surroundings since it can have a dramatic effect on their personal lives. The real success of the sustainable food movement may come from harnessing the power of urban communities that can derive great, immediate, and lasting benefit from neighborhood revitalization.

In this paragraph, she takes an active stance in using research to alleviate fears that the local community would have to start from scratch with limited expertise.

It has been argued that urban growers, especially from lower socioeconomic classes, do not have the expertise or knowledge base to generate successful yields that will ensure food security. Fortunately, agriculture is Indiana's fourth-largest industry, and the state boasts over 63,000 farms ("A Look"). In addition to the many inhabitants of LaSalle Square who have a background in agriculture, there is a wealth of knowledge about proper planting methods available from the farmers around the local area. Many of these farmers have already shown a willingness to help by selling or donating their produce to the local Urban Market. Additionally, national urban agriculture nonprofit

17

Paul 11

groups, such as Master Gardening and Cooperative Extension, offer free public education to cities beginning community agriculture programs, and some will even perform on-site training (Brown and Carter 16). By harnessing the assets of local, gratuitous knowledge and supplementing that knowledge with national support groups, South Bend has multiple resources available to train and encourage its burgeoning urban farmers.

The economic and nutritional gains of the people would only be heightened by the personal well-being that is born of interpersonal collaboration that crosses racial and social boundaries. Such an effort is ambitious; it will indeed require the time and talents of many people who care about the health of their community. But the local community is rich with the necessary seeds for such a project, which may, in time, blossom and grow to feed its people.

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Paul 12

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## 8

## From Ethos to Logos

### Appealing to Your Readers

Who you believe your readers are influences how you see a particular situation, define an issue, explain the ongoing conversation surrounding that issue, and formulate a question. You may need to read widely to understand how different writers have dealt with the issue you address. And you will need to anticipate how others might respond to your argument—whether they will be sympathetic or antagonistic—and to compose your essay so that readers will “listen” whether or not they agree with you.

To achieve these goals, you will no doubt use reason in the form of evidence to sway readers. But you can also use other means of persuasion: That is, you can use your own character, by presenting yourself as someone who is knowledgeable, fair, and just; and you can appeal to your readers’ emotions. Although you may believe that reason alone should provide the means for changing people’s minds, people’s emotions also color the way they see the world.

Your audience is more than your immediate reader, your instructor or a peer. Your audience encompasses those you cite in writing about an issue and those you anticipate responding to your argument. This is true no matter what you write about, whether it be an interpretation of the novels of a particular author, an analysis of the cultural work of horror films, the ethics of treating boys and girls differently in schools, or the moral issues surrounding homelessness in America.

In this chapter we discuss different ways of engaging your readers, centering on three kinds of appeals: **ethos**, appeals from character; **pathos**, appeals to emotion; and **logos**, appeals to reason. *Ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*