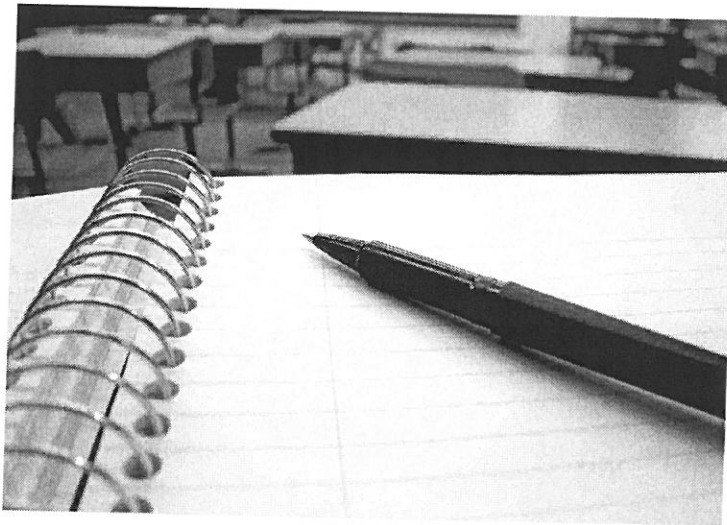


## Review material on how to write analytically

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Summarized from text titled : How to Write Analytically

by Rosenwasser, D. & Stephen, J.



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## Chapter 1: What is Analysis and Writing?

- Writing is the act of recording our thoughts in search of understanding; using writing to discover and develop ideas; a sustained act of reflection (Rossenwasser, et al, 2006)
- Analysis is a frame of mind; attitude toward experience; analysis finds questions where there seemed not to be any; it makes connections that weren't evident initially; searching for meaningful patterns; to understand how and why separate parts work as they do.

### The 5 Analytical Moves

You need to first be aware of your own thinking process; building on your strengths and removing bad habits.

#### 1) Suspend Judgment

We have a tendency to judge everything and it shuts down our ability to see and think; so try to be aware of when you respond immediately with polarized thinking; you like or dislike, agree or disagree. Try saying "I think that's interesting because ..." because now it deflects you wanting to make a judgment; you now want to explore when you say you found something most interesting because ...

#### 2) Define Significant Parts and How They're Related

Now-- you divide the subject into parts; the main elements and see how these parts are related; to each other and the subject as a whole; try to see the connections between parts and ask yourself what they mean; look for details and try to not make a "one size fits all statement" instead of saying it was a great game, be specific and say what made it a great game; go from generalization to analysis; larger subject to its key components.

#### 3) Make the Implicit Explicit

Analytical writing makes the explicit (overtly stated) what is implicit (suggested but not overtly stated); this is a process of drawing out implications and it's also called making inferences; you infer what the subject implies; inference is a thinking process.

#### 4) Look for Patterns

Here-- you look for the important pieces of the whole:

look for pattern of repetition; resemblance; repetition is a sign of emphasis

look for binary oppositions - this is a pair of elements which are opposite such as voluntary/involuntary, organic/inorganic, public/private

Look for anomalies -- the elements that seem unusual; they don't seem to fit; an anomaly is something that deviates from the normal order; as you look for patterns you look for the anomalies; for what doesn't fit the pattern; this helps us discover or revise our stereotypical assumptions or biases; attend to information that challenges your thinking or opinions; noticing anomalies leads to new and better ideas.

## 5) Keep Reformulating Questions and Explanations

Analysis requires lots of experimenting; it'll take you from uncertainty to more understanding; ask the right questions; ask the following:

- Which details are significant?
- What does the detail mean?
- How do the details fit together?
- What does the pattern of detail mean?
- What does the new pattern mean? What details don't fit?

## Chapter 2: Counterproductive Habits of Mind

- Remember-- we tend to shut down our observations and go for the quick impression.
- The fear of uncertainty - we learn early in life to pretend we understand things when we don't. We don't want to look foolish-- so we don't ask questions.
- Try to get accustomed to accepting uncertainty-- or even sitting with confusion.
- We organize our lives in predictable ways-- so we can function efficiently-- we condition ourselves to see things in predictable ways-- and to dismiss things that aren't immediately relevant.
- How or why can we call art or poetry "defamiliarization" ?
- Is one function of art to overcome the deadening effects of habit by showing familiar things in unfamiliar ways?
- Does "habitualization devour work, clothes, furniture, one's wife and fear of war.. And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life"
- What passes for thinking sometimes is simply reacting: it's right/wrong; good/bad; loved it/hated it; these represent habits of the mind and are tough to break
- We live in a culture of intention and cliché; such as "thinking outside the box"

### The Judgment Reflex

using words like ugly, realistic, pretty, unfair, crazy which are generalizations lacking deeper information-- they close off thinking; try eliminating words like should from your vocabulary and see what happens-- because judgments take the form of should statement.

the desired analytical habit to develop is to use words like:                      why --- how ---- what

Analysis asks questions like: What is the aim of the new law? Why do they pass laws like this in our state?

### Generalizing

Generalizing is not such a bad habit; it helps reduce complex ideas, events, theories or speeches to a reasonably accurate summary. The problem with generalizing is that it removes the mind from the data that produced the generalization. People tend to remember reactions and impressions; and they forget the specific causes of their impressions; so people deprive themselves of data needing to be interpreted. Sometimes-- generalizations tell us nothing because they are so broad.

### Overpersonalizing

Is all writing personal? You're doing the writing; it's your point of view; you decide what to emphasize or de-emphasize; you may inject prejudice here. Even if you write in first person as "I" you bring your biases, the influences of forces such as education, religion, culture, age, sex, race, political affiliation. Try not to overpersonalize by using limited range of culturally conditioned likes and dislikes; overpersonalizing substitutes reacting for thinking.

### Opinions vs. Ideas

- An opinion may be a repeated conventional wisdom (cliché); opinions are learned; are products of our culture and socialization process; you need to expose your opinions to scrutiny opposing evidence or reasoning; some things we take on faith like religious convictions which are more than opinions;
- An idea answers a question; explains something needing explaining; it starts with an observation; you discover a question where there wasn't one earlier; it may connect elements of a subject and explain the significance of the subject; an idea accounts for some dissonance (doesn't fit together); an idea provides direction

## Chapter 4: Interpretation: What It Is, What It Isn't and How To Do It

Interpretation is the meaning making phase of analysis

Consider this about interpretation:

- 1) everything means something; everything in life calls on us to interpret
- 2) meaning is contextual; meaning making occurs inside some social or cultural frame of reference

Anti-interpretation is when you:

- 1) say that sometimes a cigar is just a cigar
- 2) you're just saying that—reading into things that aren't there
- 3) saying "I'm entitled to my opinion"

Asking the "So what?" question

You move from observation to implication to interpretation by asking:

- 1) what does the observation imply?
- 2) Why does this observation matter?
- 3) Where does this observation get us?
- 4) How can we begin to generalize about the subject?

Turn to page 55 of text and we'll discuss how to infer implications from observations

The limits to interpretation because:

- 1) meanings are bound by rules of logic and evidence
- 2) meanings always occur within one or more particular interpretive contexts

Is meaning made? Is it a product of a transaction between a mind and the world? Between a reader and his/her material?

The making of a meaning is a process to which the observer and things observed both contribute. It is not a product of either alone.

Meanings must be reasoned from sufficient evidence to be plausible.

What is the fortune cookie school of interpretation?

It's when we believe that things have a single, hidden right meaning—you only need to crack the thing and you'll see the message.

This isn't effective as a strategy because things have multiple meanings – and by using this approach you conclude that there is only one right context for understanding and interpreting.

Does anyone have access to one universal truth?

The following is an example illustrating the Fortune Cookie School of Interpretation from the Comparative Religions course Elie teaches:

How to begin studying other faiths:

Remember that as we study other major world religions we'll be looking at their core precepts and asking ourselves how these guidelines for living a righteous life compare to our abiding faith. The potential for disagreements arise when we take on attitudes that prevent us from acknowledging the contribution each faith makes to humanity and when we assert that our faith is religiously superior to other faiths.

Let's look at these perspectives:

- 1) Exclusivist - in this position one asserts that his/her religion is the only truth.
- 2) Inclusivist - in this view, one states that his/her religion is true for him/her and your religion is true for you; this is a relativistic position and is also a tolerant view.
- 3) Pluralist - this is a desired view where one asserts that every religion has something true to tell all of us.

What do you make of this fable by Lincoln Steffens:

A man climbed to the top of a mountain and, standing on tiptoe, seized hold of the truth. Satan, suspecting mischief from the upstart had directed one of his underlings to tail him; but when the demon reported with alarm the man's success—that he seized hold of the truth—Satan was unperturbed. Don't worry he yawned. I'll tempt him to institutionalize it.

The Anything Goes School of Interpretation:

This is the opposite of the single, right answer Fortune Cookie School-- it is relativistic in style-- here one says all interpretations are equally viable—that meaning is simply a matter of individual choice—regardless of evidence or plausibility.

## Chapter 5 – Analyzing Arguments

Remember that binary means a pair of elements in opposition to each other—such as on/off, right/wrong, agree/disagree.

A binary tells you what issues are at stake so you can think and select among competing choices.

What does this quote by Marcuse mean: We understand that which is in terms of that which is not.

(light is that which is not dark)

Creating oppositional categories is fundamental to defining things – but again remember that binaries are dangerous because they can perpetuate what reductive thinking.

If all you do is binary thinking—this is what can happen:

1. most subjects can't be adequately seen in terms of only two options with nothing in between
2. binaries often conceal value judgments – like the categories primitive as opposed to civilized where one thinks that primitive is devalued because being civilized means moving beyond the primitive

So—remember to not ignore the gray areas in between the value judgments that binaries tend to conceal.

Binaries are phrased in counterproductive ways -- commonly as:

1. either/or
2. agree/disagree

In most of the cases—there are more than two alternatives but having the choices of either/or can prevent you from looking at alternatives.

Question this with the either/or binary:

Was the Civil War fought over slavery or economics?

Response:

Reformulating Binaries in Argument

Step 1 – locate a range of opposing categories look at page 74 in text on TQM

Does TQM work in American auto industry like it does in Japan?

Ask yourself what does work mean? TQM is a team oriented, collaborative management model is it accurate to be applied in America? American workers are individualistic and competitive

Step 2 analyze the define the key terms

What does it mean to ask if TQM works in the American auto industry? Does work mean making a large profit or does it mean producing more cars? Does it mean improving employee morale? Go from being vague to specific by asking the right questions

Step 3 – question the accuracy of the binary

Begin to do this by rephrasing: you ask: To what extent does ....?

So with the example of the Civil War – you say you attempt to determine the extent to which each side of the binary: slavery and economics—could reasonably be credited as the cause of the war.

You rephrase and ask: To what extent did economics, rather than slavery cause the Civil War?

All arguments rest on fundamental assumptions called givens – which are positions you decide don't need to be argued because you assume the reader will give them to you as true.

However – don't assume that their truth is self-evident.

You need to examine unacknowledged assumptions (premises).

Remember—we create categories we call mental boxes over time and they have become fixed, unquestioned because we're not fully aware of them.

Everything you read has basic assumptions that underlie it.

You need to learn how to effectively uncover assumptions—even your own when you write so you can revise your writing. It will help you understand why you believe things.

Here's an assumption to discuss:

Tax laws benefit the wealthy.

Before we discuss this—we need to ask what is the purpose of tax laws.

Should tax laws redress economic inequities?

Should they spur the economy by rewarding those who generate capital?

You want to test the validity of your assumption – what does it rest on?

### Refining Categorical Thinking

We generalize from particular experiences—but sometimes we oversimplify when the categories we use are too broad or too simply connected.

Remember—qualify claims you make and check unstated assumptions upon which your claims depend on.

The problems are:

- 1) unqualified claims
- 2) overstated assumptions

As you write—don't present a debatable premise as if it were self-evidently true because the conclusions supporting it won't hold up.



## Some Errors in Logic

### 1. Simple cause/complex effect

Try not to assign a single cause to a complex phenomenon that cannot be so easily explained. For example—blaming individuals for broad historical events.

Example:

2. False cause – assuming that two events are causally connected when they aren't.

3. Overgeneralization -- making an inadequately qualified claim. It may be true that some heavy drinkers are alcoholics—but it's not fair to claim that all heavy drinking is or leads to alcoholism.

Be aware of totalizing or making global pronouncements.

## Chapter 6: Topics and Modes of Analysis

A **rhetorical analysis** asks the following:

- 1) what does this mean?
- 2) why they are as they are and do what they do
- 3) how does the thing achieve its effects on an audience

**Rhetorical Analysis** asks not just what do I think—but also:

What am I being invited to think (and feel) and by what means?

What is rhetorical analysis? --- it's an essential skill revealing how particular elements of communication seek to enlist our support and shape our behavior. Now we can decide whether we should be persuaded to respond as we've been invited to respond.

Example: what does how this classroom is organized—with tables and chairs facing toward the greaseboard say to students who enter here?

Example: what does .....

Offer examples of how certain colleges are laid out in terms of where buildings and departments are located—where the dorms are; etc.

**Summary** --- to write an accurate summary you need to include the following elements—these are analytical questions:

- 1) which of the ideas in the reading are most significant and why
- 2) how do these ideas fit together?
- 3) what do the key passages in the reading mean?

An analytical summary can teach you how to read for the connections—the lines that connect the dots.

Strategies for writing a summary that is analytical:

- 1) look for the underlying structure: look for patterns; repetition and contrast; look for the key phrases that are repeated and they will show you the strands.
- 2) select the information that you want to discuss on some principle other than the general coverage: use the notice and focus strategy and rank items in order of importance
- 3) reduce scope and say more about less: don't worry about covering everything; find a thought or two and write on it—and describe it accurately
- 4) get some detachment: shift your focus from What--- to How and Why: just try this—and you'll discover there's more to notice about the subject

**Reaction Paper** --- this paper gives you the freedom to explore where and how to engage your subject; it brings to the surface your emotional or intuitive response—to put your response in a different context.

**Agree/Disagree Paper---** when writing this paper—the best advice is to choose neither side—instead just question the terms of the binary as you can arrive at a more complex and qualified position; decide to what extent you agree and to what extent you disagree—in the end you'll come down on one side; state your conclusion beginning with this statement: The extent to which I agree is .....

**Comparison/Contrast Paper ---** this paper does invite analysis but it is often treated as an end to itself; the reason we write these papers is to discover ideas about a subject much more easily when you aren't viewing it in isolation.

Strategies for writing the comparison/contrast paper:

- 1) argue for the significance of a key comparison – instead of covering a lot of comparisons—focus on a key comparison; you decide what to compare by ranking what is important
- 2) use one side of the comparison to illuminate the other – you don't have to treat each part of the comparison equally; don't have to give each side equal space;
- 3) imagine how one side of your comparison might respond to the other -- ask how a proponent of one theory would describe the other opposing theory; ask how and why the other would say things

**Definition Paper ---** the definition paper becomes a meaningful paper when it achieves a higher purpose

Strategies for writing a definition paper which is analytical:

- 1) test the definition against evidence” here you apply a definition to a body of information; you don't usually find a perfect fit; try to assess the accuracy and limitation of the definition; testing your definition against evidence makes your definition evolve
- 2) use a definition from one source to critique and illuminate another: identify the points of view of the sources of your definitions rather than accepting them; look for the inherent bias of the definition or the specific context in which it is being used

## Chapter 7: What Evidence is and How it Works

In general—evidence is used to test, refine and develop your ideas—rather than just proving your ideas are correct.

A claim is an assertion you make about your evidence—an idea you believe the evidence supports.

The governing claim in a paper is the thesis--- and a thesis is a theory that explains what some feature of a subject means.

Remember—writing well means sharing your thought process with your readers- telling them why you believe the evidence means what you say it does

### **Linking Evidence and Claims**

The word evident comes from the Latin—meaning to see.

To say that the truth of a statement is self-evident means that it does not need to be proved because its truth can be plainly seen by all.

Some writers leave the evidence to speak for itself—he/she is assuming that it can be interpreted in only one way—and that readers necessarily will think as the writer does.

However—the relationship between evidence and claims is rarely self-evident—it needs to be explained.

### **Unsubstantiated Claims**

Unsubstantiated means without substance.

Unsubstantiated claims occur when a writer concentrates only on conclusions—omitting the evidence that led to them—or the writer includes pointless evidence connected to an overly general claim.

If a writer makes an unsubstantiated claim—he/she is assuming that the reader will believe it just because the writer put it out there.

### **Distinguishing Evidence from Claims**

When you read—pause once in a while and label the sentences of a paragraph as either:

- 1) evidence (E)
- 2) claims (C)

### **What Counts as Evidence?**

Here—we look at two elements:

- 1) Relevance – in what ways does the evidence bear on the claim or problem that you are addressing? Do the facts really apply in this particular case—and if so, how?

- 2) Framing assumptions – in what ways is the evidence colored by the point of view that designated it as evidence? At what point do these assumptions limit its authority or reliability?

### **Kinds of Evidence**

#### **Statistical Evidence:**

used in the natural and social sciences; carries greater objectivity; remember though that statistics do not speak for themselves; their significance needs to be elucidated; don't assume that statistics are valid representations of the reality they purport to measure.

#### **Anecdotal Evidence:**

an anecdote is a little story; a narrative; a story of a particular instance; usually of one's experience; it's the opposite of statistical evidence; one can argue a trend is evident by telling a string of stories/anecdotal material

#### **Authorities as Evidence:**

one can invoke an authority; call in as evidence an expert in the subject you're writing about; an example is when an ad or commercial says "three out of four doctors recommend..... etc.)

#### **Empirical Evidence:**

Is derived from experience; the result of observation and experiment, as opposed to theory; is usually associated with the bodily senses; the word empirical means capable of being observed; evidence for the sciences is empirical; it's the scientific method.

#### **Experimental Evidence:**

This is a form of empirical evidence; capable of being observed; the focus here is on careful attention to procedure; based on methodology because the primary test of validity in the sciences is that the experiment must be repeatable so that another experimenter can follow the same procedure and achieve the same results

How do we know what we think we know?

## Chapter 8: Using Evidence to Build a Paper: 10 on 1 versus 1 on 10

The phrase 10 in 1 means it's better to make 10 observations or points about a single issue or example than to make the same basic point about 10 related issues or examples (10 on 1).

Doing 10 on 1 teaches us to narrow our focus and then analyze in depth, drawing out as much meaning as possible from the best examples.

A paper that repeats a single, unchanging idea generally follows the form we call 1 on 10—where the writer makes a single and usually very general claim like “exercising is good for you” and then attached it to 10 pieces of evidence.

If you do this—all you're doing is creating a list—not developed thinking.

The 1 on 10 list results from a mistaken assumption about the function of evidence. It simply functions to corroborate a claim—and little else.

Beyond corroborating—evidence needs to test, develop and evolve the thesis.

In other words—the thesis should not be static.

We learned to write the Five Paragraph style

This is based on a model called procrustean—meaning we tend to produce conformity by violent or arbitrary means (definition) We learn this model in high school.

This is the model for the Five Paragraph

1. an introduction ending with a thesis listing three points
2. three body paragraphs—each supporting one of the three points
3. a conclusion beginning with “Thus, we see.. that essentially repeats the thesis statement as it was in paragraph one.

In this model—we don't analyze connections among the categories.

### Analyzing Evidence in Depth: 10 on 1

In this model—you take one part of the whole—putting it under a microscope and then generalizing about the whole on the basis of analyzing a single part.

The 10 on 1 leads you to draw out as much meaning as possible from your best example—you narrow and focus—and analyze in depth.

Use 10 on 1 to accomplish the following:

- 1) locate the range of possible meanings your evidence suggests
- 2) make you less inclined to cling to your first claim
- 3) open the way for you to discover the complexity of your subject
- 4) slow down the rush to generalize—be specific and better able to account for your evidence

## **The Metaphor of Pan, Track and Zoom**

Pan—the camera pivots around a stable axis—giving the viewer the big picture—we see everything from a distance. Pan provides a context and establishes the representativeness of the example the writer later examines in more detail.

Track – the camera no longer shows in one place but follows some sequence of action—pan surveys the room of guests and track picks up a particular guest and follows them along across the room, picking up a photograph along the way

Zoom – the camera moves in even closer on a selected piece of the scene—showing us more of the details—like focusing in on the woman's hand – a writer zooms in here showing us detail of a particular piece of evidence. The zoom allows you to do this.

In a short paper—3 to 5 page paper you might devote as much as 90% of your writing to exploring what one example (the 1 or zoom) and what it reveals about the larger subject. IN the rest of the paper—make connections with other examples—testing and applying the ideas you arrived at from your single case. In depth analysis of your best example thus creates a center from which you can move in two directions:

- 1) toward generalizations about the larger subject
- 2) toward other examples using your primary example as a tool of exploration

## Chapter 9: Making a Thesis Evolve

What a strong thesis does – it is a theory that explains what some feature or features of your subject means.

A strong thesis comes from carefully examining and questioning your subject—about its meaning that would not have been immediately obvious to your readers.

A weak thesis makes no claim or make a weak claim like “Exercising is good for you” without explaining it—it may be an opinion or belief that your reader will likely agree with.

Remember—

- 1) a strong thesis moves—is fluid—it evolves – it changes as the paper progresses—it is reformulated as you write the paper
- 2) the changes in the thesis are galvanized by its repeated encounters with evidence; it evolves by gaining in complexity; and by doing so it becomes more accurate

A weak thesis has the writer saying the same thing over and over again—it is predictable

An example is when the writer says “And once again, we see that ..”

YOU need to make your thesis evolve---- it makes it more accurate

Take a risk and look for complicating evidence—that’s how you make the thesis more fully responsive to evidence.

Any examples here :

Working Thesis ----→ Confirming evidence ---→ complicating evidence -----→ revised thesis -----→ repeat process

### Qualifying Overstated Claims

Remember—the thesis needs to evolve to be more accurate—so you must qualify it or show its limitations.

Exercise: How can we complicate the following claims and reformulate them—making them more accurate?

- 1) welfare encourages recipients not to work
- 2) happy people are moral people
- 3) moral people are happy
- 4) people who are religious are more moral than those who are not
- 5) religious people are happier than non-religious people

### What a Good Thesis Statement Looks Like

A great thesis statement is one that pits itself against another – it’s great because it illuminates and brings into focus the issue. In this style—both ideas have some validity but the forward momentum comes from playing the preferred idea off the other one.

You want to create tension here--



## Six Steps for Making a Thesis Evolve

- 1) formulate an idea about your subject— the thesis makes a claim about the meaning of your evidence that is good enough to get you started
- 2) see how far you can make your thesis go—in accounting for the evidence; use your thesis to explain as much of your evidence
- 3) locate evidence that is not adequately accounted for by the thesis—you need to look because you'll have a tendency to miss it-- you only want to see what fits and not notice the evidence that doesn't fit
- 4) make explicit the apparent mismatch between the thesis and selected evidence; explain how and why some pieces of evidence don't fit the thesis
- 5) reshape your claim to accommodate the evidence that hasn't fit; you will have to reword your thesis to explain apparent contradictions
- 6) repeat steps 2, 3, 4 and 5 until you're satisfied that the thesis statement accounts for your evidence as fully and accurately as possible.

## Chapter 10: Structuring the Paper: Forms and Formats

### Romantics versus Formalists

There is a split between invention and arrangement-- is similar to the conflict between romantic and formalist ways of thinking about organization.

Formalist model emphasizes writing as an act of communication with an audience and stresses formal conventions that allow the reader to know what to expect and where to find things in the paper. Here—form shapes content

Romantic model resists any kind of preconceived pattern for papers—and the content should naturally generate an appropriate form. Romantics conceive of the paper as organic- the parts grow like a plant—grow according to an inherent logic rather than conforming to imposed rules.

The Romantic appeals to people who like the intuitive style or semi-conscious side of writing. Here—content shapes form.

Using formats heuristically (a teaching method – where one discovers how to use or solve a problem on their own

- 1) state the problem
- 2) develop criteria of adequacy for a solution
- 3) explore at least two inadequate solutions
- 4) explicate the proposed solution
- 5) evaluate the proposed solution
- 6) reply to anticipated criticisms

### Six Steps for Making a Thesis Evolve

- 1) formulate an idea about your subject—a working thesis
- 2) see how far you can make this thesis go in accounting for evidence
- 3) locate evidence that is not adequately accounted for by the thesis
- 4) make explicit the apparent mismatch between the thesis and selected evidence
- 5) reshape your claim to accommodate the evidence that hasn't fit
- 6) repeat steps 2 through 5 several times

### Remember—a strong thesis usually contains:

- 1) tension -- balance of this against that and ...

the tension is evident in the actual sentence structure of the thesis statement  
example: Although X appears to account for Z, Y accounts for it better

So—what appears as a binary opposition-- may then become a complex combination of the two

### The Shaping Force of Transitions

Transitions are the connective tissue among the parts of the essay

Wording for transitions include:

- 1) Another example of ....
- 2) Also .. (you start the paragraph with Also..)

You can try other transitions to be more specific—to identify the specific nature of a relationship

So—you can use words like “Similarly ...” or “By contrast ...”

These represent links between where you’ve been and where you’re going—are usually points in your writing at which thinking is taking place.

You again update the thesis as it moves through evidence

Think of transitions as directional indicators—especially at the beginning of paragraphs

Other transitions are:

- 1) but
- 2) yet
- 3) nevertheless
- 4) however

these words alert the reader to changes in the direction of the writer’s thinking

## **Deduction and Induction**

**Deduction** -- deduction reasons from a general principle (assumed to be true) to a particular case

Here you apply a generalization to particular cases

The principle is introduced up front – followed by using it to select and interpret evidence.

Example: attitudes toward rules governing sexuality in a culture can have economic causes

Deductive reasoning uses evidence to draw out implications—this is called inferring the consequences of the claim

**Induction** --- in this paper—you begin with particular data and you seek to generate some explanatory principle.

Here—you move from observation of individual cases to the formation of a general principle

The thesis of an inductive paper is acceptable if the writer demonstrates the theory is based on a reasonably sized sampling of representative instances.

## **Compare/Contrast**

In general— when we compare subject A with subject B—we make all the points about A and then make the points about B by referring back to A as you write.

The disadvantage of this subject A then subject B format is that you can easily lose focus—you may not manage the points you raise about each side of your comparison parallel—and you have 2 loosely connected halves.

The preferred format is to organize by topic—do your compare and contrast by topic—not A then B—

Here—you go with A1 and B1, A2 and B2, A3 and B3

You talk about A and B under a series of subtopics

For example—if comparing two films- you organize your paper using headings like directing, script, acting, special effects, etc.

### **Structuring the Paragraph**

Paragraphs divide the writing into manageable bites—you are being kind to the reader.

If your paragraph is longer than half a page—break it up.

More frequent paragraph breaks gives reader a resting point.

Long paragraphs are daunting—they are easy to get lost in—and the writer and reader lose focus

## Chapter 11: Introductions and Conclusion

Remember: don't do too much in the introduction and not do enough in the conclusion.

**Introduction:** It gives the reader his/her first impression—and we all know how indelible that can be.

**Conclusion:** Leaves the reader with a last, and potentially lasting impression of the written world you have constructed.

The difficulties in composing introductions and conclusion arises in deciding how yo should deal with the thesis.

How much of the thesis should you put into the introduction.

Remember—your thesis evolves—through successive encounters with evidence—and it may require a different kind off introduction and conclusion than you have been taught to write.

What Introductions So: Why What I'm Saying Matters

The introduction isolates a specific question or issue and explains why, in a specific context, this question or issue matters.

You occupy a middle ground between saying too much too soon and saying too little up front

The introduction gives the reader a quick sampling of some feature or features in your evidence that arouses curiosity. A rule of thumb is to start fast—

Your introduction says: Look at this reader—it is worth thinking about and here's why.

The introduction needs to contain the following—in one or two paragraphs:

- 1) define your topic—issue, question, problem and say why it matters
- 2) indicate your method of approach to the topic
- 3) provide necessary background or context
- 4) offer the working thesis that your paper develops

The intro. Needs to engage the reader

The standard shape of an introduction is a funnel—it starts wide, provides background and generalization, and then narrows the subject to a particular issue or topic.

### How much to introduce up front: Typical Problems

Digression – when you try to include too much background

Incoherence – when you try to preview too much of your paper's conclusion in the introduction

Prejudgment --- when you appear to have already settled the question to be pursued in the rest of the paper. You preview your paper's conclusion at the outset- you risk appearing to assume something as true that your paper in fact needs to test.

### What Conclusions Do ?

It escorts the readers out of the paper—just like the intro. Brought them in.

What do readers want as they leave the textual world you have taken them through?

Think of the concluding paragraph as the site of the paper's final SO WHAT?

In other words—the reader asks Where does this get us? Or Why does this matter?

The conclusion always states or restates the thesis in its most fully evolved form.

**The conclusion:**

- 1) it come full circles: creates a sense of closure
- 2) it pursues implication: goes from a particular issue to broader issues; what are the implications for the future?
- 3) It identifies limitations: acknowledges restrictions of method or focus in the analysis and qualifies the conclusion and its implications accordingly.

In the conclusion—you bring together things that you have already said—establishing their connection and ascending to one final statement of your thinking.

**Solving Typical Problems in Conclusions:**

Redundancy: it's a good idea to refer back to the opening—but it's a bad idea just to reinsert it mechanically. Instead, reevaluate what you said earlier in light of where you've ended up, repeating only key words or phrases from the introduction.

Raising a totally new point: raising a new point can distract or bewilder a reader; and writer's do this out of their desire to avoid repetition

Overstatement: many writers are confused over how much they should claim in the conclusion; out of the understandable (but mistaken) desire for a grand (rather than a modest and qualified) culmination, they overstate the case. They assert more than their evidence has proved or suggested.

Anticlimax: the end of a conclusion is a charged site because it gives the reader a last impression of your paper; don't end your paper with a concession