EXPOSITORY WRITING S-20e: THE ESSAY
SUMMER 2005
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COURSE READER

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Part II. Readings for Unit 1

Oliver Sacks. “Brilliant Light.” The New Yorker. 20 December 1999. 56-73. 39
Elements of the Academic Essay (from G. Harvey, *The Academic Essay*)

1. **Thesis**: your main insight or idea about a text or topic, and the main proposition (though it may have several parts) that your essay demonstrates. It should be true but arguable (not obviously or patently true, but one alternative among several), be limited enough in scope to be argued in a short composition and with available evidence, and get to the heart of the text or topic being analyzed (not be peripheral). It should be given early (not just be implied—though its fullest and sharpest statement may be withheld for a time), and it should govern the whole essay (not disappear in places).

2. **Motive**: the reason, which you give at the start of your essay, why someone might want to read an essay on this topic—why it isn’t just obvious, why it requires attention and explanation. In practice this often means showing that other people hold or might well hold other views (which you think need correcting) or might be puzzled or curious. Your motive won't necessarily be the reason you first got interested in the topic, or the personal motivation behind your engagement with it: this could be private and idiosyncratic, whereas your motive is what you say to show that your argument isn't idiosyncratic but is rather of interest any serious student of your topic. Nor should the others you posit who hold a different view, or might have missed something or simply be puzzled, be straw dummies. You should make clear that your motive is genuine: a misapprehension or puzzle that an intelligent reader would plausibly have and argue cogently for, a point that such a reader would really overlook. Defining motive should be the main business of your introductory paragraphs, where it is usually introduced by a form of the complicating word “But.”

3. **Evidence**: the data—facts, examples, or details—that you refer to, quote, or summarize to support your thesis. There needs to be enough evidence to be persuasive; it needs to be the right kind of evidence to support the thesis (with no obvious pieces of evidence overlooked); it needs to be sufficiently concrete for the reader to trust it (e.g. in textual analysis, it often helps to find one or two key or representative passages to quote and focus on); and if summarized, it needs to be summarized accurately and fairly.

4. **Analysis**: the work of breaking down, interpreting, and commenting upon your data, of saying what can be inferred from the data such that it supports a thesis (is evidence for something). Analysis is what you do with data when you go beyond observing or summarizing it: you show how its parts contribute to a whole or how causes contribute to an effect; you draw out the significance or implication not apparent to a superficial view, making clear the logic you are using. Analysis is what makes the writer feel present, as a distinct and active mind; so your essay should do more analyzing than it does summarizing or quoting.

5. **Keyterms**: the recurring terms or basic oppositions that your argument and analysis rest upon, usually literal but sometimes metaphors. An essay's keyterms should be clear in meaning (defined if necessary) and appear throughout (not be abandoned half-way); they should be appropriate for the subject at hand (not unfair or too simple—e.g. implying a false or constraining opposition); and they should not be inert clichés or abstractions (e.g. “the evils of society”).

6. **Assumptions**: beliefs about life, people, history, reasoning, etc. that you don’t state but are implied in your keyterms and in the logic of your argument, that you simply take for granted and assume that your reader will too. These should bear logical inspection, and if arguable they should be brought out into the open and acknowledged.

7. **Structure**: the sequence of main sections or sub-topics, and the turning points between them. Your sections should follow a logical order, and the links in that order should be apparent to the reader (see “stitching”). But it should also be a progressive order—there should have a direction of development or complication, not be simply a list or a series of restatements of the thesis (“Macbeth is ambitious: he's ambitious here; and he's ambitious here; and he's ambitious here, too;
thus, Macbeth is ambitious”). And the order should be supple enough to allow you to explore the topic, not just hammer home a thesis. (If the essay is complex or long, its structure may be briefly announced or hinted at after the thesis, in a road-map or plan sentence.)

8. **Stitching**: words that tie together the parts of your argument, most commonly by (a) signaling transitions, acting as signposts to indicate how a new section, paragraph, or sentence follows from the one previous; but also by (b) recollecting an idea or word or phrase used or quoted earlier. Repeating key terms is especially helpful at points of transition from one section to another, to show how the new section fits in.

9. **Sources**: persons or documents—referred to, summarized, or quoted—that help you demonstrate the truth of your argument. They are typically sources of (a) factual information or data, (b) opinions or interpretation on your topic, (c) comparable versions of the thing you are discussing, or (d) applicable general concepts. Whether you are affirming or challenging your sources, they need to be efficiently integrated and fairly acknowledged by citation—see Writing with Sources.

10. **Reflecting**: places where you pause in your main demonstration to reflect on it, or raise or answer a question about it—as when you (1) consider a counter-argument—a possible alternative or objection or problem that a skeptical or resistant reader might raise; (2) define your terms or assumptions (what do I mean by this word? or, what am I assuming here?); (3) draw out an implication (so what? what might be the wider significance of the argument I have made? what might it lead to if I'm right? or, what does my argument about a single aspect of this suggest about the whole thing? or about the way people live and think?); (4) consider a possible explanation for the phenomenon that has been demonstrated (why might this be so? what might cause or have caused it?); and (5) offer a qualification or limitation to the case you have made (what you're not saying). The first of these reflections can come anywhere in an essay; the second usually comes early, the last three often late, in concluding.

11. **Orienting**: bits of information, explanation, and summary that you give to orient the reader who isn't expert in your subject, enabling such a reader to follow the argument. The orienting question is, what does my reader need here? And the answer can take many forms: necessary factual information about the text, author, or event (e.g., given in your introduction); a summary of a text or passage about to be analyzed; pieces of information given along the way about passages, people, or events mentioned (including announcing or “set-up” phrases for quotations and sources—see Writing with Sources). The challenge is to orient briefly and gracefully.

12. **Stance**: the implied relationship of you, the writer, to your readers and subject: where you implicitly position yourself as an analyst and how you implicitly characterize your readers. Stance is defined by such features as style and tone (e.g., familiar or formal); the presence or absence of specialized language and knowledge; the amount of time spent orienting a general, non-expert reader; the use of scholarly conventions of form and style. Your stance should be established within the first few paragraphs of your essay, and it should remain consistent.

13. **Style**: the choices you make of words and sentence structures. Your style should be exact and clear (should emphasize the main idea and action of each sentence, not bury it) and plain without being flat (should be graceful and a little interesting, not stuffy).

14. **Title**: it should both interest and inform. To inform—i.e. inform a general reader who might be browsing in an essay collection or bibliography—your title should give the subject and focus of the essay. To interest, your title might include a linguistic twist, paradox, sound pattern, or striking phrase taken from one of your sources (the aptness of which phrase your reader comes gradually to see). You can combine the interesting and informing functions in a single title or split them into title and subtitle. The interesting element shouldn't be too cute; the informing element shouldn't go so far as to state a thesis.
Proofreading Guide

All essays should be proofread and edited to repair basic errors in grammar and punctuation. This is a checklist of the most common sources of error in essays. It is not a comprehensive guide but a working guide for the final stage of the revision process--editing for basic errors.

Sentence Grammar


   The thoughts that a reader is thinking is only considered “great” when others know those thoughts.
   --> The thoughts that a reader is thinking are only considered “great” when others know those thoughts.

2. Verb Tense Shift: Avoid unnecessary shifts from present to past, or past to present tense.

   When Wideman talked to his brother, Robby confesses that he did have a problem with drugs.
   --> When Wideman talked to his brother, Robby confessed that he did have a problem with drugs.

3. Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement: Pronouns often refer to something the writer has already named--an antecedent. The pronoun and its antecedent should agree in number and person.

   Agreement in Number (Singular or Plural)
   The word “valid” must be defined by the reader. They determine what an acceptable meaning is.
   --> The word “valid” must be defined by the reader. He or she determines what an acceptable meaning is.

   Agreement in Person (First, Second, or Third)
   His theory was to avoid their rules by living your life under your own set of rules (a shift from third person--his, to second--your).
   --> His theory was to avoid their rules by living his life under his own set of rules.

4. Vague Pronoun Reference: Often found in sentences beginning with this, these, they, it, she, or he. The writer has to decide what the vague pronoun refers to and rewrite to make the reference clear.

   We feel we must own the latest car, the latest clothes, the latest technology. This is created by the media.
   --> We feel we must own the latest car, the latest clothes, and the latest technology. This feeling is created by the media.

Sentence Integrity

Make sure that your thoughts do not fall apart into fragments or slide together into run-on sentences and comma splices.

1. Sentence Fragments: A fragment is an unattached phrase or dependent clause. Most fragments belong to the sentence that precedes or follows. The following example can be revised by simply changing the first period to a comma.
We see Imogene through Marya's point of view. A point of view that is somewhat altered and deranged.

2. Run-on or Fused Sentences: Run-on sentences contain two sentences brought together without punctuation. The writer must decide how he or she will revise the run-on, using a period or a conjunction:

There is no separation between the private and the public in American culture violation of privacy is always present.

There is no separation between the private and the public in American culture. Violation of privacy is always present or There is no separation between the private and the public because, in American culture, violation of privacy is always present.

3. Comma Splices: the writer uses a comma instead of a period.

Miller writes about the African landscape, he fails to write about the people who inhabit it.

To revise, substitute a period for the comma or use a coordinating conjunction after the comma (and, or, nor, but, for, yet).

**Punctuation**

1. Comma

A. Between the items in a series of words, phrases, or clauses.

   We all know that we are important no matter what we drive, but we also know that the automobile still causes jealousy, anxiety, and competition.

B. Between two independent clauses:

   We judge people by their economic status, and in doing so we build a scale called the “social hierarchy.”

C. On either side of a non-restrictive clause (the clause often begins with who, whose, which, when, or where):

   The Shield soap commercial shows the wife, whose name is Gail, as the “handyman” in the house.

D. After an introductory phrase or dependent clause:

   After Imogene and Marya's friendship begins, one constantly wonders how long it will last.

2. Apostrophe to Show Possession

A. Add an “‘s” to singular and to collective nouns to show ownership:
   singular nouns--Miller's experiences, the city's budget
   collective nouns--a society's codes, the group's work
B. When the singular noun ends in an “‘s,” add the “‘s” and then say the word aloud (boss’s, Luis’s, Coles’s). If it sounds too awkward, drop the final s, but keep the apostrophe (Fuentes' story).

C. To form the possessive of plural nouns ending in s, add only an apostrophe (consumers' desires, students’ rooms).

D. Don't confuse personal pronouns (no apostrophe) with contractions (always an apostrophe).
its = possessive pronoun (Its leaves have fallen.)
it's = a contraction of it is (It's a confusing chapter.)
your = possessive pronoun (your pen, your paper, your words)
you're = a contraction of you are (You're right.)
What is Revision?

Revision means, literally, “seeing again,” and it’s a big process at the heart of our writing course, at the heart of ambitious, eloquent writing itself. Revision moves you from rough draft to final essay. My comments on your rough drafts are directed lightly at issues of punctuation and grammar and more forcefully at the fundamental issue of how you specify and articulate an argument: what is your thesis and motive; how does this thesis emerge from the evidence you gather and analyze (close reading)? Your revision will aim at developing these elements and making them clear. So revision will entail a total effort. You may have to delete certain lines or paragraphs, develop entirely new ones, arrange ideas in an entirely new order, refine your interpretation and analysis. In revising, think big, think conceptually; don’t think of simply fixing, tuning up, but of “re-seeing.” And so the need to “fix” small items I might have marked with my scribbles, such as grammar or syntax, is secondary to the need to “re-see” your argument; upon re-seeing, something small that was simply incorrect may actually drop out altogether as you work to refine your argument.

The Evolution of Style

As the term progresses, we'll think more and more about style. For Essay 1, our stylistic aim is the elimination of passive voice (“The decision was made...”) and the spurious use of “to be” (“She was seeing...” versus “She saw...”).

We’ll also watch for “nominalization,” the conversion of verbs into nouns, which dulls the action of a sentence. The phenomenon can be seen in the following sentence:

Yet it is not simply in the vocabulary Sacks employs that his appreciation of the beauty of his work is demonstrated.

Where is the noun that should be a verb to give us more vivid action? Where is the passive voice? Sacks is the subject, appreciates the verb--make this clear and you have a much more vivid sentence with real action:

Sacks appreciates the beauty of his work, and shows this in more than simply his vocabulary.

Some of My Editing Marks

check your speelling and insert a lettr

delete this word word or, punctuation

make a new paragraph here

insert a comma here please, or do this insert a colon

transpose words these or this “punctuation”.

close up

these lines and this extra space and this spa ced-out word, and insert a spacehere
capitalize this term, united states but not this term, State’s Rights

this is a funky word choice or a phrase awkward in the expression of itself

this is a significant term or good idea that I consider in my overall comments (unfortunately, I'm

   unable to comment directly on everything): keep it coming!

watch for colloquial word choices that may be too informal for our purposes, dig?

watch for dangling modifiers: “Walking down the street, our eyes are beseiged by corporate logos

   and slogans.” (Eyes don’t walk down streets.)

watch for misplaced modifiers: “Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.”

   (The many “of our community,” are, presumably, not sick “of our community.”)

Because I walked the dog. This is a sentence fragment.
How to Read My Essay Comments

Each essay I return to you, rough draft and final draft, is marked with my numerous comments. I write these to indicate my response, as a professional reader, to your writing. If read carefully, these comments will help you revise your essays for this course and help you think about writing essays for other courses. Here’s a guide to reading my comments:

• **Read the end comments first.** The letter I address to you and staple to the back of your rough draft outlines the most important areas—usually three or four—on which to focus in revision. My letter to you stapled to the final draft takes note of those revisions and the strengths of the draft. The final draft letter may also indicate areas to work on in the next essay.

• **Then read the entire essay with my marginal comments.** Comments in the margins reflect the conversation I have with your essay as I read it. They reflect, too, the responses that your readers across the college—professors and teaching fellows—and your general readers outside the college will have. I’ll probably write fewer marginal comments on final drafts than on rough drafts because our concern won’t be another revision, but the next essay.

• **Focus first on substantive comments when revising, last on sentence-level comments.** My comments come in two varieties: 1) substantive remarks about ideas, structure, and evidence found in end comments and marginal comments and 2) sentence-level comments and corrections, generally found in marginal comments. Sentence-level comments and corrections will usually note elegant turns of phrase and effective expression, incorrect punctuation, lack of variety in sentence length and construction, mechanical and spelling errors and awkward diction. Substantive comments will help you make the large-scale (“global”) revision that every rough draft, if it is to put forth your best, most sophisticated thinking, must undergo. Sentence-level comments will signal what you need to watch for once you're ready to polish your final draft. But they aren’t to be understood to mean that the repair of sentence-level errors constitutes revision. Some sentences marked with sentence-level errors may actually disappear with large-scale revision. As the term continues, we’ll turn now and again to issues of style and grace in writing, and this should help, too, with sentence-level errors. If you’d like, I can recommend a supplementary style guide to you. On the use of sources, consult Harvey’s *Writing with Sources*.

• **Please ask me about comments you don't understand.** My remarks won't do much good if you can’t understand them.

A few additional notes: 1) Even the most thorough essay comments will not address every aspect of your essay: too many comments are confusing and make it difficult for you to know how to begin revision. I address the main areas to work on to produce a strong essay. So don't be surprised if the comments on your final draft make a suggestion or two not addressed in my comments on the rough draft; such comments mean your essay has complicated its argument and raised new questions. 2) Essay comments are not instructions written in stone. They reflect the responses of a single well-informed reader (albeit a reader who is also your teacher). You make the choices about how to respond, how to realize your vision of the essay. But please keep in mind that you're writing ultimately for readers, not just to hear the sound of your own voice: your goal as a scholar is to make your ideas accessible to an audience. If my comments suggest that the argument is difficult to follow, the thesis unclear, or the evidence unconvincing, I’m telling you what it felt like to be your audience. It’s your job as a writer to address these concerns with your best judgment.
Revision Club: A Reader’s Guide

As you read your partners’ papers, pay attention to the way they describe the intellectual issues or problems in the text they’re examining, the way they precisely orient the audience to the text, the way they present and analyze evidence from their texts (quotations and close reading), the way they put together their own argument, which should be sustained through the paper and its two interpretations, guided always by the thesis statement. Your goal as a reader is to offer your partners specific feedback and useful criticism for re-vision (give what you want in return; “Nice job!” isn’t enough. You are the test audience: did the paper teach you anything? What are its specific new ideas? What don’t you understand? What’s missing?

To begin your evaluation, please write your name next to the author’s and prepare to mark errors of whatever sort (grammatical, punctuation, citation, stylistic) and make comments directly on the paper. Note that often the best ideas, the ones crucial to re-vision, the ones worth crafting and re-crafting into a powerful thesis statement, will come toward the end of a rough draft. End your evaluation with a short note to the author, on the back of their paper, addressing what works well, what they can “re-see.” In your note, offer a critique based on the six categories below. It takes me at least 35-45 minutes to carefully read and comment upon a student paper of five pages, and it should take you this long, too.

1. Analytical Problem and Motive
Does the paper have a reason to exist? Are you given a reason to read it? Does the author point out something unexpected about the text at hand, something that needs to be examined, discovered—an analytical problem in the text? Perhaps they’ve included an actual analytical question or questions. If an analytical problem appears that tells you what the paper seeks to investigate, mark it as “ANALYTICAL PROBLEM” in the margins. If an analytical problem isn’t clear, note this too (“NO ANALYTICAL PROBLEM”). If a distinct motive appears, mark it, too (“MOTIVE”). If none appears, mark its absence and try suggesting one, based on your reading of the whole paper, on what you may have found surprising, unexpected, worth reading.

2. Orienting
Does the author offer a precise, pointed summary of their text, so that you know what the text is about and how the intellectual problem comes into play? Do you know who the author is, the name of the text? You should.

3. Quotations and Close Reading
Note the location of quotations, whether block quotes or shorter in-text quotes. Mark them in the margins of your partner’s paper by writing “QUOTE” next to them. This can help the author re-see how many quotes she has and determine if they are being put to good use. Is this quotation style technically correct? Do the quotations fit into the paper grammatically, syntactically? See Writing with Sources, Chapter 1. Offer corrections if necessary.

How does the author treat her quotations? Does she offer an analysis of the quote’s contents? Does this analysis include close attention to the terms, phrases and/or ideas that emerge from a quotation? It should.

4. Insights: CRUCIAL REVISION COMPONENTS
Note the location of insights, places where the author has offered an idea of her own. These insights will contain interesting claims you haven’t thought about, claims that attempt to address and explain
the complexity of the text. In academic writing, these claims will emerge from analysis, out of work with sources, out of the evidence. Mark these original ideas in the margins by writing “INSIGHT” next to them. Insights are extremely important. They are moments where the author has taken a risk with her thinking, which is vital to any good essay. These are crucial moments to develop and refine in re-vision. TAKE RISKS. BE DARING.

5. Structure
For Essay 1, we’ll following a first interpretation/second interpretation/significance-to-understanding-the-text-overall structure. Is this structure clear in your author’s paper? Do they make clear transitions between its parts? Do you know where the argument is going at each moment?

6. Thesis
Think about this last, after reading the entire paper carefully. A thesis, a statement of the paper’s essential and original argument, should come in one or two sentences—likely at the end of the paper’s introduction, but elsewhere, perhaps, if you’re given an idea of where to look for it. If one appears, mark it with “THESIS.” If one is absent, mark “NO THESIS” next to the first paragraph. In either case, write down your own ideas, after reading their whole paper, for an extraordinary, daring thesis statement.

BIG NOTE: Often a thesis will emerge by putting insights together into a bold statement, and, again, often the best insights come toward the end of a rough draft.

7. Style
Mark occurrences of passive voice: “Thus it is seen that Hawthorne critiques scientific hubris.” Think of something better: “Hawthorne’s critique centers on a concept of scientific hubris.” And mark occurrences of “to be,” which dulls the action: “Here, she is hoping for a new kind of science.” Better: “She hopes for a new science.”

And mark “transition words” that seem more legalistic than lucid: thus, however, furthermore, as mentioned above, wherein. These aren’t wrong, but they are often stiff.

Finally, mark this way of introducing a quote: “Safire states.” There are more descriptive verbs to show what an author does: “Safire complains, suggests, intones, asserts, claims, huffs...”
Revision Club: Helpful and Not-So-Helpful Reader Letters

Helpful: gives the reader’s experience with specific critique, specific suggestions

Dear T. S.,

This is a good rough draft. You have some novel (no pun intended) insights throughout the essay (for example, when you observe that Francis Bacon goes back and forth on the question of “commanding” and “interpreting”) and you take an interesting perspective on Bacon using Susan Griffin’s keyterm of “emotional knowledge.” I agree with your worry that the paper seems split by your ideas about “social utility” at the beginning and then your turn to Griffin’s “emotional knowledge” in the second half. One way that you might use to make the essay flow more smoothly (I guess that’s what we mean by structure) would be to make the parts of the essay come together more clearly around a strong thesis. Right now, in the beginning, it seems like you really just repeat what Jacob already says about social utility in Bacon. And this doesn’t hook up with your Griffin ideas.

So I’m not really sure what your thesis is. It doesn’t seem that what I think is your current thesis (that useful science interprets nature) really carries through or is “risky.” Is it that “emotional knowledge” is part of how Bacon’s thinks of social utility? (Talk about “keywords”!) Or that Bacon thinks that “emotional knowledge” can’t have social utility? It seems like you could pull these parts of your paper together into a thesis. I think your insights about emotional knowledge in Bacon in the last couple of pages are where you can really look to make that thesis come out. Also, I was thinking that there’s a big counter-argument to Bacon’s “emotional knowledge” that you might consider to lend some interesting fireworks and “complexity” (it seems like that’s what we’re supposed to go for!) to this part. Also, to keep being critical—sorry!—I don’t think you put in a good quote to show that Bacon does think about social utility for science in the first place. Good luck!

Yours truly,

Gertrude S.

Not-so-helpful

Dear Gish,

Great paper! I think you have thoroughly examined Bacon and found good quotes. It looks like you used your secondary sources well. They back up your points and help with the motive. The motive is not really that apparent at the beginning your paper, but by the end I found your purpose for writing the paper. From what I saw it seems as though you are trying to say that although Bacon want to command nature, he tries to make it seem like he’s intimate with her. At the beginning of the paper it is not really clear in what direction you are going to go. Your transitions are good and go back to your thesis. Overall I think this is a great draft. Good luck!

Yours sincerely,

John L.
Elements and Methods 1: Close Reading, Analytical Question, Thesis, Motive

Close Reading
This is a fundamental skill you’ll use again and again in academic writing. In close reading, you quote passages and analyze them. When professors say “close reading,” they often have in mind two different but related senses of the term: (1) a process of analyzing a text, and (2) an entire essay, a product, based on that analysis. For Essay I, we’ll think of close reading as part of the analysis that is the basis of your entire essay.

The process of close reading is aimed at a text’s meaning. There are two steps to the process. The first is observation and annotation or written notes of such especially literary elements as narration, tone, dialogue, imagery and diction (word choice). You may also note striking terms and descriptions, references to other texts or figures, references to opponents or allies. The second step is a matter of analysis: drawing inferences from these observations and pondering what they might mean in a specific context. You will be keen to find strategies, assumptions, perspectives, beliefs, contradictions, curiosities, inconsistencies that cry out for your explanation, your analysis.

How Do You Ask an Analytical Question? An important step in writing academic essays is to ask a good analytical question that gives us something to discover. This isn’t always a matter—often it’s not—of literally asking a question in an essay, though such a strategy can be quite useful and welcomed by your audience. Establishing this question won’t be your first step—you’ll need to observe, annotate, and thoughtfully consider specific passages of text (that’s right, do some close reading) to help develop an analytical question.

A good analytical question:
• points to a genuine intellectual dilemma or problem in the text. The question focuses on a confusion or ambiguity in a text, an issue on which different readers will have different ideas.
• yields a specific answer that is not obvious. A question such as “Why did Oliver Sacks call his father’s brother ‘Uncle Tungsten’?” offers nothing to discover—it’s answered easily by anybody who reads Sacks’s essay, “Brilliant Light.”
• suggests an answer complex enough to require a whole essay’s worth of argument. If the question is too small (“Was the protagonist, Aylmer, mad?”) or vague and speculative (“Why do scientists go mad?”), it won’t suggest a bold line of argument. And the question should elicit analysis and argument rather than summary or description.
• can be answered by the text. We’re not looking for generalizations or copious external research (i.e., “What is the latest development in string theory?”).

Tips:
• “How” and “why” questions generally require more analysis than “who/what/when/where.”
• Good analytical questions can highlight patterns and/or connections, inconsistencies and/or contradictions.
• Good analytical questions can also ask about implications or consequences of your analysis.

So your analytical question should have an answer, given the available evidence, but not an easy one, not one that would be the same for all readers, not one that is obvious to all readers.

Thesis
Your thesis of one or two or three sentences should give at least a provisional answer to your analytical question, an answer that needs to be developed and defended. Your thesis won’t be a statement of the obvious, or a statement of fact. It will be an interesting and important, specific and daring answer to your analytical question. Your readers will learn that they should approach a text or texts with a new perspective, a new understanding that they haven’t thought of before.

Bear in mind that a narrow focus, rather than a broad one, will allow you to develop powerful insights. Stick closely to what you find in your quoted passages, which illustrate your
argument and lend it specificity. This is the essence of close reading. Be sure your thesis stems from the evidence you’ve studied in your close reading.

Place your thesis statement in the first paragraph—near or at its end, most likely—to drive your audience into the paper.

Tips:

• A good thesis will relate specifically to the evidence explored in the paper; offers a provocative way to think about an issue of some complexity; will make a claim that isn’t obvious, but rather arguable—someone could disagree with it; will take a big risk. **Specificity, complexity, arguability, risk: SCAR!**

• How can you diagnose thesis problems? Think of “the three T’s.” A dysfunctional thesis may be:
  - toothless
  - teasing
  - too much for the text

We’ll discuss these symptoms in class.

**Motive**

*Why should the reader care?* What’s the context for your argument? Why did you take up this topic?

People besides the instructor, people who are literate and intellectually curious, should want to read your paper. They won’t want to read your response to an assignment; you have to give them a reason why your thinking is worth their time. Possibilities:

• The way to think about the topic isn’t what they’d expect, or what it might appear to be on first reading.
• The standard view of the topic (or text) needs to be challenged or corrected.
• There’s a mystery here, a puzzle, a question, an interesting wrinkle, a complexity, or perhaps a overlooked contradiction that needs to be seen and sorted out.
• There’s an ambiguity here, something unclear, that could mean two or more things.
• There’s an overlooked matter or approach that is actually interesting and important.
• There’s a pattern that needs to be discerned or that reveals an underlying meaning.
• There’s a connection between two or more texts that shed new light on another text or even those two texts themselves; or there’s a connection or tension between two or more aspects of a single text that shed new light on that text.
• There’s something to learn about a bigger phenomenon by studying this smaller one (but *be careful*; this motive is why we might say something too broad, impossibly diffuse: “Throughout human history, man has struggled to learn about his environment...”).

Your motive should be stated early in the paper. The introduction is probably best.

**How Writers Write**

Remember that for our purposes in this writing class, we not only want to think about what people are writing about, but how they do it. In our class readings, we’ll encounter a wide variety of arguments, evidence and analysis. Note the sort of examples that authors use, the sort of analysis they offer. What type of sources do they have? How do they interact with their sources? Note, too, the sort of complications they entertain. Do they just use the ideas from a source directly? Do they modify the ideas from a source? Do they point out weaknesses in a source? Does a source contribute to their theory? Does the author explain how this happens, if it does? Does an author's own, new argument have some holes or weaknesses that she addresses or at least acknowledges? How do they introduce their topic and their thesis? How do they conclude?
Elements and Methods 2: Essay Structure: No Secondary Sources

The essay, in some ways, can be like a gracefully told story. Give it some tension, some drama.

**Beginning** (page 1; one, two or more paragraphs)
Function: let your intellectually curious reader know what is the topic of your essay, why you write it (motive) and what is your argument (thesis). Also, establish context for the topic and the texts at hand, orient your readers.

The principle that guides the beginning is the analytical questions or “problem” that compels you to write. What analytical question does your reader need to recognize, and why? How should they think about that question?

For Essay 1: your “problem” will stem from a passage or passages you’ve chosen to close read. You can put a thesis at the end of the first paragraph or two (most common). Or you can let the audience’s understanding of the problem keep them focused for a thesis statement to come in the body of the paper. In such a case, a clear analytical question or questions in the beginning can help them focus.

Then offer the summary of your text, with author’s names and text title and identity of author, if necessary (will your audience know who Gawande is, for example?). Give the main ideas of the text, including the actions and issues that relate to your “problem.”

**Middle** (pages 2-3 or more)
Function: solve the complex problem you’ve posed. Show your work.

Essay 1: Introduce your passage, reveal your close reading and first interpretation and explain why it works (“This passage is interesting because…”; “We can see that…”).

Then reveal the limits of this first interpretation (“But this view is limited…”). Look more deeply at the passage and/or offer other evidence that doesn’t seem to fit. You might raise new questions, object to your first interpretation, or make pointed observations of the passage and/or new evidence. Either way, explain why your first interpretation doesn’t work completely satisfactorily.

Offer your second interpretation and explain why it’s the best (“What the text truly attempts is…”). How does this second interpretation account for all the evidence? You still work with evidence as you explain the logic of your interpretation and its power.

Then explain how your second interpretation helps to understand the text as a whole, in relation to the problem that guides your paper. How should your audience understand this text? And it’s probably best, most honest and interesting if you think about the complexities of the problem with which your argument still struggles, the intriguing puzzles that remain.

**End** (last page)
Function: give your audience a feeling for what they’ve learned.

Essay 1: Offer a pithy, clever re-articulation of your argument. If any key point has been implicit in what you’ve been writing, make it explicit. Highlight the strengths of your interpretation, in light of the complexities and intriguing nature of the problem you’ve explored (but avoid dry summary). Let your audience know they have a new way to think and keep them thinking.
Examples of the Elements at Work 1: Analytical Question, Motive, Thesis, Close Reading

A description of analytical questions is found in “Elements and Methods 1” (page 12). An analytical question asks about something that needs to be discovered, asks about a problem to explore, to solve. An analytical question is usually not literally stated as a question, though it can be; this is a stylistic choice that is completely your own.

A description of thesis is found in the “Elements of the Essay” (page 1) and “Elements and Methods 1” (page 12). The thesis is the argument your paper wants to make. “What’s your thesis?” your readers will ask. The thesis can be made in a thesis statement of one, two or possibly three sentences. The longer the paper, generally, the longer the thesis statement (a rough and imperfect rule).

The motive (see page 1, page 12) is the reason your paper exists at all. Why should people read your paper? Are you changing the way people think about an issue? Are you bringing a new issue or problem to the reader’s attention? Why is your thesis important?

_A good thesis, motive and analytical question are inextricably linked._

Example 1.

Hilary Catherine Robinson.
from _Exposé: Essays from the Expository Writing Program_, Harvard University, ’99-’00.

Questions of Rejected Motherhood: Male Creation, Ambition, and Solitude in Mary Shelley’s _Frankenstein_

At first glance, especially from the perspective of cinematic renditions of the story, Mary Shelley’s _Frankenstein_ emerges as a horror tale about a monstrous creature and a murderous rampage. In truth, however, the monstrosity of Frankenstein lies not in the appearance and deeds of its inhuman creation, but rather in the disastrously ambitious machination of the creator himself and his refusal to accept the socially and philosophically revered role of motherhood. In her novel, Mary Shelley makes a statement about men who endeavor to create and the emotions that motivate them. Such men create at the call of ambition and rivalry; they are ill-suited for a motherhood they will ultimately reject. In contrast to her overly ambitious male figure, Shelley includes throughout the novel female figures who exemplify the traditional characteristics of motherhood: stability, capability, self-sacrifice, and ingenuity. Elizabeth, for example, sustains the Frankenstein family through tragedy and death; Justine Moritz bravely hangs for a crime she did not commit; Caroline Beaufort, Victor’s mother, dies selflessly while caring for the sickly Elizabeth, whom she has treated as her own child. Women act as healing and generating forces, while men, working in solitude, breed evil and create horrors, as Victor Frankenstein does.

Frankenstein raises complex issues of motherhood, filial association, and the illegitimacy of male creation. Mary Shelley herself, given her turbulent experiences with motherhood and being mothered (three of her four children dies in infancy and her own mother dies in childbirth [Smith 9-10]), was undoubtedly in conflict over these issues and the questions they raise about what constitutes true monstrosity. The character of Victor Frankenstein, who is possessed by an insatiable ambition for glory, harnesses the powers of creation and in so doing takes upon himself the role of mother. He embraces, however, none of the traditional characteristics or duties of motherhood. Indeed, he rejects his own child. To infiltrate the female sphere and attempt to assume motherhood is socially unacceptable; to create and subsequently refuse motherhood is an outright disaster. Victor’s most heinous crime lies in these two acts.
The terms reversal (peripeteia) and recognition (anagnorisis) are well known. They name, according to Aristotle, the essential ingredients of complex plot in tragedy. Reversal he defines as a change which makes the action veer in a different direction to that expected, and he refers us to the messenger from Corinth who comes to cheer Oedipus and eventually produces the recognition leading to an opposite result. Recognition is often linked to this kind of reversal, and is defined as a change from ignorance to knowledge. “Then once more I must bring what is dark to light.” Oedipus says in the prologue of the play—and does exactly that, however unforeseen to him the result. In most detective stories, clearly, there is both a reversal and a recognition, but they are not linked as powerfully as in tragedy. The reversal in detective stories is more like an unmasking; and the recognition that takes place when the mask falls is not prepared for by dramatic irony. It is a belated, almost last-minute affair, subordinating the reader’s intelligence to such hero-detectives as Ross Macdonald’s Archer, who is no Apollo but who does roam the California scene with cleansing or catalyzing effect.

I wish, however, to draw attention to a third term, left obscure in the Poetics. Aristotle calls it to pathos, “The Suffering” or as Butcher translates it, the “Scene of Suffering.” To pathos, he says—and it is all he says—‘is a destructive or painful action, such as death on the stage, bodily agony, wounds and the like.”

Aristotle is probably referring to what happens at the conclusion of Oedipus Rex, though chiefly offstage: the suicide of Jocasta and self-blinding of Oedipus. Or to the exhibition of the mangled head of Pentheus by his deluded mother, in Euripides’ Bacchae. He may also be thinking of the premise on which the tragic plot is built, the blood deed from which all consequences flow, and which, though premised rather than shown, is the real point of reference. I wish to suggest that some such “heart of darkness” scene, some such pathos, is the relentless center or focus of detective fiction and that recognition and reversal are merely paths toward it—techniques which seek to evoke it as strongly and visually as possible.

I don’t mean to say that we must have the scene of suffering—the actual murder, mutilation, or whatever—exhibited to us. In The Chill, and in Ross Macdonald’s novels more generally, violence is as offstage as in Oedipus Rex. (The real violence, in any case, is perpetrated on the psyche.) But to solve a crime in detective stories means to give it an exact location: to pinpoint not merely the murderer and his motives but also the very place, the room, the ingenious or brutal circumstance. We want not only proof but, like Othello, ocular proof. Crime induces a perverse kind of epiphany: it marks the spot, or curses it, or invests it with enough meaning to separate it from the ordinary space-time continuum. Thus, though a Robbe-Grillet my remove the scene of pathos, our eyes nervously inspect all those graphic details which continue to evoke the detective’s story’s lust for evidence.
Fear and Loathing of the Imagination in Science

Recently a reader responded with dismay to a New Yorker article by historian Daniel J. Kevles about the charge of scientific fraud brought by Margot O'Toole against Theresa Imanishi-Kari. What distressed this reader was not so much the issue of fraud itself as Kevles's argument that the exercise of judgment and imagination in science was essential and should not be conflated with fraud:

...I am troubled by Kevles's acceptance of a need for scientists to be imaginative in analyzing research results. What might the public's realization that this practice exists do to its confidence in the hard sciences? Will we next be expected to believe that accountants require imagination in their work?²

Such expressions of uneasiness about the role of the imagination in science are not new. When the physicist John Tyndall delivered a "Discourse on the Scientific Use of the Imagination" to the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1870, he too drew shocked reactions from the press. The London Times was severe:

The glory of a Natural Philosopher appears to depend less on the power of his imagination to explore minute recesses or immeasurable space than on the skill and patience with which, by observation and experiment, he assures us of the certainty of these invisible operations. [Tyndall] confesses that Mr. Darwin "has drawn heavily upon time and adventurously upon matter." We ask ourselves whether we are listening to one experimental philosopher describing the achievement of another experimental philosopher. We had been under the impression that Natural Philosophers drew no bills.³

The echo of fiscal analogies reverberates over the space of more than a century: scientists should be as methodical (and as peddling) as accountants ("Natural Philosophers draw no bills"). To permit the imagination to infiltrate science is to tamper with the books, to betray a public trust.

My aim here is not to show that first-rate science requires imagination; others have already pleaded this point with vigor and eloquence.³ Rather, I would like to explore how and why large portions of the educated public—and many working scientists—came to think otherwise, systematically opposing imagination to science. I shall argue that the critical period was the mid-nineteenth century, when new ideals and practices of scientific objectivity transformed the persona of the scientist and the sources of scientific authority. More specifically, I shall focus on the apparent paradox, also first framed in the early decades of the nineteenth century, that the more scientists insisted upon the obdurancy and intransigence of facts, the more they feared the power of their own imaginations to subvert those facts. Why would scientists convinced of the power of ugly facts to murder beautiful theories, as Thomas Henry Huxley famously put it, nonetheless take heroic precautions to protect those burly facts from gossamer-spun imagination?

The key to this paradox lies buried within the histories of the scientific fact, on the one hand, and of the faculty of the imagination, on the other. In order to dramatize the novelty of the mid-nineteenth-century developments, I shall begin with a brief account of how eighteenth-century natural philosophers and natural historians understood the relationship between scientific facts and the scientific imagination. The pivot of my story is the polarization of the personae of artist and scientist, and the migration of imagination to the artistic pole. At roughly the same time that artists working in a romanticist vein emphasized creativity over mimesis, scientists troubled by the overthrow of one time-honored theory after another in quick succession sought more durable achievements. This early nineteenth-century confrontation of individualistic, brashly subjective art with collective, staunchly objective science was not simply the collision of some timeless faith in the imagination with an equally timeless faith in facts. Rather, it signaled a mutation in the meanings both of imagination and of facts that still shapes the moral...
Syphilis and the Shepherd of Atlantis

Stephen Jay Gould

Syphilis and the Shepherd of Atlantis

FROM NATURAL HISTORY, OCTOBER 1990

We usually manage to confine our appetite for mutual recrimination to merely petty or mildly amusing taunts. Among English speakers, unannounced departures (especially with bills left unpaid) or military absences without permission go by the epithet of "taking French leave." But a Frenchman calls the same, presumably universal, human tendency _filer à l'anglaise_, or "taking English leave." I learned, during an undergraduate year in England, that the condoms I had bought (for no realized purpose, alas) were "French letters" to my fellow students. In France that summer, my fellow students of another nation called the same item a _chapeau anglais_, or "English hat."

But this form of pettiness can escalate to danger. Names and symbols inflame us, and wars have been fought over flags and soccer matches. Thus, when syphilis first began to ravage Europe in the 1480s or 1490s (the distinction, as we shall see, becomes crucial), a debate erupted about naming rights for this novel plague—that is, the right to name the disease for your enemies. The first major outbreak had occurred in Naples in the mid-1490s, so the plague became, for some, the Italian or the Neapolitan disease. According to one popular theory (still under debate, in fact), syphilis had arrived from the New World, brought back by Columbus's sailors, who had pursued the usual activities in novel places—hence "the Spanish disease." The plague had been sufficiently acute a bit northeast of Columbus's site of return—hence "the German disease." In the most popular moniker of all, for this nation maintained an impressive supply of enemies, syphilis became "the French disease" (_morbus Gallicus_ in medical treatises, then usually published in Latin), with blame cast upon the troops of the young French king, Charles VIII, who had conquered Naples, where the disease first reached epidemic proportions, in 1495. Supporters of this theory then blamed the spread through the rest of Europe on the activities of Charles's large corps of mercenary soldiers, who, upon demobilization, fanned out to their homes all over the continent.

I first encountered this debate in a succinct summary written by Ludovico Moscato, who described potential herbal remedies in the catalog of his museum, published in 1672: "Ne sperando, a ci di la colpa, li Spagnuoli lo chiamavano mal Francese, li Francesi male Napoletano, e li Tedeschi, mal Spagnuolo" (not knowing whom to blame, the Spaniards call it the French disease, the French the Neapolitan disease, and the Germans the Spanish disease). Moscato then added that other people attribute the origins of syphilis to bad airs generated by a conjunction of the three most distant planets—Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn—in the night sky.

How, then, did the new plague receive its modern name of syphilis, and what does "syphilis" mean, anyway? The peculiar and fascinating tale of the naming of syphilis can help us to understand two key principles of scholarship that may seem contradictory at first but that must be amalgamated into a coherent picture if we hope to appreciate both the theories of our forebears and the power of science to overcome past error: first, that the apparently foolish concepts of early scientists made sense in their times and can therefore teach us to respect their struggles, and second, that these older beliefs were truly erroneous and that science both progresses, in any meaningful sense of the term, and holds immense promise for human benefit through correction of error and discovery of genuine natural truths.

"Syphilis," the proper name of a fictional shepherd, entered our language in a long poem composed in 1500 verses of elegant Latin hexameter and published in 1530 by the greatest physician of his generation (and my second favorite character of the time, after Leonardo da Vinci)—a gentleman from Verona (also the home of Romeo and Juliet), Girolamo Fracastoro (1478–1555). Fracastoro dabbled in astronomy (he became friendly with Copernicus when both studied medicine at Padua), made some crucial geological observations about the nature of fossils, wrote dense philosophical
mer embraces the era’s culture while the latter, whether by choice or circumstance or a combination of both, rejects it. Gatsby and Wilson, however, both suffer from the influence of the new culture. Wilson suffers because his wife Myrtle has an affair with the culture of personality, literally embodied in the character of Tom Buchanan. Wilson is “his wife’s man and not his own” (144), and accordingly his happiness depends almost entirely on his relationship with Myrtle, possibly the only person with whom he has a real connection. As their relationship deteriorates, he begins to crumble. He loves Myrtle, and she certainly loved him at one point; as her sister remarks, “You were crazy about him for a while” (35). Myrtle’s values, however, have become so skewed since their marriage by the influence of the new culture that she denies having ever loved him at all. When asked why she married him, she responds, “I thought he knew something about breeding but he wasn’t fit to lick my shoe” (39). Breeding for Myrtle conveys an apparent superiority, as does Myrtle’s condemnation of her husband for secretly borrowing a wedding suit because he could not afford to buy his own. It is not the secrecy that bothers her but her husband’s need to borrow. Her belief that the clothes make the man extends to the way she views herself, as conveyed by Nick when he describes Myrtle’s transformation at the apartment:

Mrs. Wilson had changed her costume some time before. . . . With the influence of the dress her personality had also undergone a change. The intense vitality that had been so remarkable in the garage was converted into impressive hauteur. Her laughter, her gestures, her assertions became more violently affected moment by moment and as she expanded the room grew smaller around her until she seemed to be revolving on a noisy, creaking pivot through the smoky air. (35)

By calling her dress a “costume” and referring to the “violently affected” nature of her gestures, Nick associates Myrtle with a performer. He also notes with evident disapproval how Myrtle attempts to project the air of superiority crucial to a successful personality. The same air drew her into Tom’s grasp, and she rationalizes the affair with the phrase “You can’t live forever” (40), a comment characteristic of the “permissive . . . morality of individual fulfillment” that Lear’s associates with the new culture (3).

Wilson’s morality, on the other hand, is far from permissive, governed by his belief that “God sees everything” (167). Consequently, it is Wilson, and not Myrtle, who bears the brunt of the guilt for the affair. Upon realizing that his wife has another life, “Wilson [is] so sick that he look[s] guilty, unforgivably guilty” (131); he tells his wife, “You may fool me, but you can’t fool God” (167). When Myrtle runs away from Wilson and toward Tom’s car—away from the man who won’t beat her and toward the man who will—she dies in the name of the values of the new culture. Still, Wilson’s commitment to Myrtle runs deep; he seeks out Gatsby, who he believes ran down his wife, kills him, and then kills himself. When the gardener finds Wilson’s body, “the holocaust [is] complete” (170). In truth, the “ashen” Wilson had been drained of life long before (169), ever since his wife became enamored with status and appearance and began “walking through her husband as if he were a ghost” (30).

While Wilson’s victimization is obvious, the novel makes less clear whether or not the wealthy and charismatic Gatsby is worthy of the reader’s sympathy. Only through Nick’s personalized narration is the reader able to separate the great Gatsby from the true Gatz and realize that the latter is a victim of the former, thus bringing together Wilson and Gatsby and supplying an essential element of Fitzgerald’s critique. As a young cadet masking his poverty behind a military uniform, the true Gatsby took hold of a dream in the form of a beautiful and wealthy girl. His undying pursuit of a fairy-tale ending forced his transformation into the great Gatsby, sealing his tragic fate. Nick explains how Gatsby’s initial romp with Daisy became more than he had anticipated:

He had intended, probably, to take what he could and go—but now he found that he had committed himself to the following of a grail. He knew that Daisy was extraordinary but he didn’t realize just how extraordinary a “nice” girl could be. She vanished into her rich house, into her rich, full life, leaving Gatsby—nothing. He felt married to her, that was all. (156-57)

If Gatsby felt married to Daisy, then he probably suffered from a guilt similar to Wilson’s when she married Tom

Montagu in 1769 agreed with Hurd that the new philosophy, by dispelling fables, destroyed the golden age of poetry; she also indicated her doubt about Thomson's assertion that by 'untwisting' light and the rainbow, Newton had opened new materials for poetry. 'Echo, from an amorous nymph, fades into voice, and nothing more; the very threads of Iris's scarf are untwisted...' Twenty years later, a writer who signed himself 'C.H.', defining poetry as 'the language of passion and feeling,' attributed its decline both to the loss of a 'strong propensity to the marvellous' and to the incompatibility between the habitual perceptions of scientist and poet. In a statement anticipating passages in both Wordsworth and Keats, he said that, as opposed to poetical description,

philosophical description exhibits objects as they really are; their reasons and causes, not as they appear to be... Thus a botanist disregards the beauty of a flower, and is only intent upon its internal construction.

For this reason poetry was at its height when writers described the 'beauty of the works of nature, before Newton discovered the true system of the world.' As soon as men begin to philosophise, they become less fit for works of imagination.'

In the next century, the Utilitarian opponents of poetry, as we saw, accepted the proposition that the progress of reason and imagination, of science and poetry, must be inversely related, and merely monopolized the threnody into a song of thanksgiving. One man who was both historian and poet put this theory of cultural history in its most unqualified form, and explicitly on the grounds that the scientific and poetic descriptions of the sensible world are not reconcilable. 'We think,' wrote Macaulay in 1825, 'that, as civilisation advances, poetry almost necessarily declines.' The progress of knowledge is from 'particular images to general terms,' and from concrete perception to generalization, but 'analysis is not the business of the poet. His office is to portray, not to dissect.' After his apodictic fashion, Macaulay leaves us no alternative. No person in these enlightened times can write or even enjoy poetry 'without a certain unsoundness of mind.' The truth of poetry is 'the truth of madness. The reasonings are just; but the premises are false.'

We cannot unite the incompatible advantages of reality and deception, the clear discernment of truth and the exquisite enjoyment of fiction.33

In this historical context, we can discriminate the separate strands in Keats's indictment of science in Lamia.

First, cold philosophy dispels the charms of myth and fairy-lore—it empties 'the haunted air, and gnomed mine'—but like Hurd and Warton, Keats cannot agree with James Thomson that such materials are easily spared. Also, philosophy breaks down the rainbow into its physical components and causes; 'we know her woof, her texture,' and this knowledge 'unweaves' the rainbow, and substitutes a dull, abstract thing for the beauty and mystery of concrete perception. In maintaining, with Lamb, that Newton 'had destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to the prismatic colors,' Keats accedes to the fallacy (in which he has been joined by numerous professional philosophers) that, when a perceptual phenomenon is explained by correlating it with something more elementary than itself, the explanation discards and replaces the perception—that only the explanation is real, and the perception illusory. And to Këats, if not to Thomson, the ability to versify and dramatize the new scientific 'truths' was no adequate payment for the 'life of sensations,' and the 'indolent' surrender to the sensuous concrete which is integral to his characteristic poetry.

As a consequence, the presumed conflict between the poet's vision and the scrutiny of the scientist raises the question not merely, as in Hurd and Warton, of poetic decline, but, as in Macaulay, of poetic survival. For Keats, in his moments of depression, accepts the exclusive disjunction of some contemporary positivists: either science or poetry; if Newton describes reality, then the poet's rainbow is an illusion; if science in general is true, then poetry in general is false. The basic theme in Lamia, as in so many of Keats's major poems, is that of illusion against reality. And after all, as Keats himself sets up the story, Apollo inus, the cold philosopher, was right. Lamia was indeed, as he said, a serpent; and all her furniture, according to the passage from Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy which Keats quoted as his source, 'no substance but mere illusions.' So far as Lamia and her phantom palace symbolize the poet's view of the world, they reflect Keats's opposition
of the 'authenticity of the imagination' to 'consequentive reasonings,' and his recurrent fear that the subject matter of his poetry is the vestige of a magical view of the world, vulnerable to the cold stare of reason.

Keats exemplifies a romantic tendency to shift the debate about the discrepancy between science and poetry from the question of poetic myth and fable to the difference between the visible universe of concrete imaginative observation and that of scientific analysis and explanation. Whether they agreed or disagreed with Keats's conclusions, many writers followed his procedure by pointing to an object traditionally consecrated to poets—if not the rainbow, then the glow-worm, the lily, the star, or the cloud—in order to contrast its traditional poetic depiction to its description in the science of optics, biology, astronomy, or meteorology.

In the same year that *Lamia* appeared (1820), Thomas Campbell’s ‘To the Rainbow’ gave further evidence that the happy marriage of poetry and Newton’s *Opticks* was ending in recriminations and divorce. ‘I ask not proud Philosophy,’ Campbell cried, ‘To teach me what thou art.’

Can all that optics teach, unfold
Thy form to please me so,
As when I dreamt of gems and gold
Hid in thy radiant bow?
When science from Creation’s face
Enchantment’s veil withdraws,
What lovely visions yield their place
To cold material laws!

Nine years later Poe’s sonnet ‘To Science’ echoed phrases from *Lamia*, and posed even more bitterly the conflict between the ‘dull realities’ of Science with its ‘peering eyes,’ and the consecration and the poet’s dream.

Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree? 

Almost all the important romantic theorists commented on the disparity between imaginative and scientific perception, and deplored the disproportionate development of the latter in recent times. It is important to recognize, however, that by far the greater number refused to admit that there is any inherent and inescapable conflict between science and poetry, or that scientific progress necessarily entails poetic decline. The most common procedure was to regard these, when properly employed, as parallel and complementary ways of seeing, and to hold that while analysis yields truth, this is not the whole truth, and cannot, in vigorous and flexible minds, unweave the poet’s rainbow.

Wordsworth, for example, had been present at Haydon’s famous dinner, but with customary prudence had refused, pending further inquiry, to drink Keats’s toast. ‘And don’t you remember,’ Haydon wrote to Wordsworth, many years after the event, ‘Keats proposing “Confusion to the memory of Newton,” and upon your insisting on an explanation before you drank it, his saying: “Because he destroyed the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to a prism.”’ The caution is understandable in a poet who had a Renaissance responsiveness to the grandeur of man’s intellectual exploration of the universe, and who was also aware of the contributions of the ‘nature-study’ fostered by science to the power of exact description which he held to be a necessary, if not sufficient condition for poetry. Later Wordsworth was to expand a brief allusion to Newton’s statue at Cambridge into three lines surpassing all the windy panegyrics of the preceding century—

> Newton with his prism and silent face,
The marble index of a mind for ever
Voyaging through strange seas of Thought, alone.

We must not mistake Wordsworth’s contempt, in his *Lyrical Ballads*, for the ‘meddling intellect’ which murders to dissect, and for the ‘philosopher’ who would peep and botanize on his mother’s grave, for a general attack against science. Other passages make it clear that these lites are to be read only as his judgments against the fallacy of misplaced abstraction, and against the scientist whose laboratory habits are so indurate that he continues to analyze where only imagination and feeling are relevant. In the Preface to these *Ballads*, Wordsworth said that poetry, being grounded in man’s emotional nature, incorporates, and has nothing to fear from the narrower ‘knowledge’ of science: ‘Poetry is the first and last of all knowledge—it is as immortal as the heart of man.’ In this passage of sustained eloquence, he not only echoes the opinion of Sprat and the eighteenth-century enthusiasts that poetry will assimilate ‘the remotest discoveries of the Chemist, the Botanist, or Mineralogists,’ but passes beyond them to herald the poetry of *machinisme* and the industrial revolution. ‘If the labours of Men of science should ever create any material revolution . . . in our herald,’ the poet ‘will be at his side, carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the science itself.’

I must add Wordsworth’s comment to Isabella Fenwick, which can be read as a belated rebuttal to Keats’s toast at the Haydon dinner:
Examples of the Elements at Work 2: Elements in Action;

After reading a selected essay carefully, see if you can observe and describe how the elements of the essay come together.

Group 1

- Give a play-by-play of the essay’s STRUCTURE. See how the main ideas of the paragraphs fall into place, see if they follow some order of importance from paragraph to paragraph.

Group 2

- Identify the THESIS and MOTIVE.
- Identify 3 KEYTERMS in the paper, in order of importance.
- Identify 2 examples of the ANALYSIS of EVIDENCE.

Group 3

- Identify 3 examples of ORIENTING. This may include true and/or interpretive (or analytical) summary, description, information (of what kind?)
- Identify 3 examples of STITCHING. This may include transition sentences, the recurrence of keyterms, recollection of ideas.
- Identify 3 different uses of SOURCES. This may include sources argued for or against, sources used to provide analytical authority.

Group 4

- Identify 2 examples of REFLECTING. This may include complication and/or counter-argument.
- Describe the conclusion.
Elements and Methods 3: Reading Approaches to Secondary Sources

1. What is the analytical question the source asks?
2. What is the source’s thesis?
3. What are the source’s keyterms of analysis?
4. What is the author’s perspective on the analytical question?
   a. Does the author have a particular disciplinary perspective: is she a historian, for example? A literary critic? A journalist? A scientist?
   b. What are her assumptions, stated or unstated?
5. What do you find useful, disagreeable, provocative about this source? Specific ideas? Keyterms?
6. What do you have to say to this author? Do you support her? Disagree with her? Want to show her a new application of her ideas? Question her perspective? Question her assumptions? Does she anger you? Can you approach her in a civilized way?
7. SAY WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY TO THIS SOURCE IN YOUR PAPER.
Elements and Methods 4: Four Ways to Use Sources in Academic Essay

To establish a problem or question worth addressing. The writer presents a problem, question, or dilemma, usually in the introduction, that the sources highlight in some way, either because they disagree with one another, the writer disagrees with them, they illuminate a heretofore murky matter, the information they present is conflicting, and so on.

From a history of science paper on John Huston's film *Let There Be Light*, a World War II documentary about a group of soldiers treated for battle fatigue: Many historians and psychiatrists have observed psychiatry's remarkable changes during the war, but often they present its emergence as a seamless transition in which psychiatry arrives as the “Cinderella” of the evening in the 1950s (Menninger 1991). Alternatively, histories which examine the more complicated expansion of psychiatry do so only from the inside—by looking at the internal changes of the discipline (Grob 1991; Hale 1995). An examination of *Let There Be Light* allows us to see the popularization of American psychiatry in the middle of this century more accurately, as an outgrowth of its dynamic relationship to the government and role in the war effort.

To supply context, background, expertise or information. The writer uses sources to explain what readers need to understand, usually about a time or culture, to follow the essay. In other words, the sources help the writer build a context for a discussion.

From an economics paper on the post-Cold War viability of NATO: Created in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was a military alliance composed initially of 21 nations, including the United States, Great Britain, France, and Belgium. Officially, NATO “embodies the transatlantic partnership between European members of NATO and the United States and Canada” and was “designed to bring about peace and stability throughout Europe” (NATO). [...] Directly after the fall of the Soviet Union, however, NATO began an eastward expansion to include former Soviet satellite countries. This move, we may infer, was designed to ensure the Organization's relevance in the post-Cold War world.

To provide key terms or concepts. The writer borrows a term or concept (perhaps qualifying, refining, or adding to it) and uses it to elucidate the topic at hand.

From a literature paper on race and class in Toni Morrison's novel *Song of Solomon*: In his essay “On Being Black and Middle Class,” Shelby Steele describes the conflict between the two aspects of a middle-class black man's identity as a “double bind” in which his race and class are “a threat to one another” (42). Macon Dead and his son, Milkman, both economically prosperous black men, find themselves caught in the double bind that Steele describes. But instead of strongly agreeing with Steele's assertion of the importance of individual ownership and middle class values (Steele 47), Morrison presents a more ambiguous view: ascribing to middle class values under certain conditions, she also suggests the importance of abandoning some of those values.

To provide another interpretation, possibility, or counter-argument. The writer presents a commentator's opinion or interpretation to argue against it (when the view differs from the writer's own), refine it (when the view is useful but incomplete or partially mistaken), or build on it (when the view is in agreement with the writer's, and the writer can harness it to make a point).

From a history paper on the murder of Captain James Cook by a group of Hawaiians in 1779: Both Sahlin's and Obeyesekere's interpretations of Cook's death rely upon the stereotypic notion that the Hawaiians were political simpletons, unscheming and ever faithful to their King. I would like to put forward a different portrait of Hawaiian society. The individual, I propose, is slave to neither a structure nor the dominant political force in his or her society. The events surrounding Cook's death are better explained if we revise Obeyesekere's theory of pragmatic rationality [...].
Elements and Methods 5: Common Problems when Integrating Quotations

1. **Plunking.** Plunking manifests itself in two ways: failing to introduce a quotation and failing to interpret a quotation. A quotation that's plunked looks as if it's been dropped out of the sky; you aren't providing sufficient context, and you're making the reader work too hard to discern its relationship to what you've written before and after it.

2. **Writing the dead lead-in.** Often you want to announce the quotation in the words that precede it. But don't revert to “Turner says, “X” or “Turner states, “Y.” That’s boring, and you're wasting an opportunity to explain, in the lead-up to the quotation, why and how the quotation is relevant and interesting. Gordon Harvey suggests you “choose a verb that catches exactly the attitude you want to convey” (9), such as “protests,” “charges,” “admits,” etc. You can also avoid the dead lead-in by translating/summarizing part of the quotation in your own words, so as to incorporate it more elegantly into your prose. For example: Sean recounts that sexual experiences were always announced to the group, for “[A brother's] success was our success” (Sanday 140).

3. **Repeating the quotation in your own prose.** Be careful not to let mere repetition of the quotation suffice as “interpreting” the quotation.

4. **Failing to edit the quotation.** Don’t include quotation that has no importance to the discussion at hand or that lets the quotation’s author take the train of explanation away from you. Read through the quotation and be sure that every aspect of it is important to you. Replace what you don’t need with an ellipsis: ... Do not use ellipses at the very beginning or very end of a quotation; we know the quotation has more that came before and after it; virtually all quotations do. If you need to adjust the words inside the quotation to make a referent clear, to adjust the verb tenses, etc., put your new words in brackets.

5. **Mismatching the syntax.** I'll let Gordon Harvey take care of this one: “Construct your own sentence so the quotation fits smoothly into it” (8).

6. **Using a quotation as explanation.** A quotation usually needs explaining, so it should not itself constitute explanation. There are, of course, rare exceptions.

7. **Underquoting.** Of course, you're underquoting if the reader feels you have no direct evidence for your claims. Underquoting can also be a symptom of excessive summary. Summarizing is a good and useful skill. But your reader doesn’t want to take your account on faith; she needs evidence from your sources.

8. **Overquoting.** In the words of my colleague Kim Cooper (from her Writing Center handout #14): “Try to quote only the most essential, illustrative, or vividly-phrased material. Too much quoting obscures your own thinking, while highlighting that of your source. It suggests to your reader that you're leaning heavily on your source because you don't have much to say for yourself, or that you couldn't be bothered, or didn't take the time, to summarize. Remember that your readers are trying to figure out what you think. If they only wanted to hear your sources' positions, they'd go read them.”

9. **Using incorrect punctuation.** Please see Harvey pp. 9-11 for technical rules of punctuation in quoting, including special rules for block quotes.
Elements and Methods 6: Essay Structure: Framing a Primary Source with Secondary Sources

The essay, in some ways, can be like a gracefully told story. Give it some tension, some drama.

**Beginning** (page 1; one, two or more paragraphs)

Function: let your intellectually curious reader know what is the topic of your essay, why you write it (*motive*) and what is your argument (*thesis*). Also, establish context for the topic and the texts at hand, orient your readers: why is all this significant, interesting? When did it happen? Certainly you’ll mention your primary sources in your introduction. You *may or may not* mention secondary sources in your introduction.

The principle that guides the beginning is the analytical question that compels you to write. What question does your reader need to recognize, and why (*motive*)? How should they think about that question (*thesis*)?

For Essay 2: your “problem” will stem from issues that arise in your primary text(s). How can you use your secondary source as a framework (or lens) through which to understand, in a new way, the analytical question in your primary text(s)? The secondary source(s), the framing text(s), can help formulate an analytical question to investigate. And/or it can help you with think of smaller questions or problems (*complications, counter-arguments*) on the way.

You will need to “orient” your audience to the primary text, with author’s name and text title and identity of author if necessary. Will your audience know the author? When in doubt, assume their lesser knowledge. Give the main ideas of the text, emphasizing, perhaps, the actions and issues that relate to your “problem.”

See **EXAMPLE A** (page 27), which incorporates a range of secondary sources as it sets up an analytical problem, motive and thesis.

**Middle** (pages 2-4 or more)

Function: solve the complex problem you’ve posed. Show your work.

Introduce passages from your two essays that are interesting or “problematic,” and offer your close reading (“This passage reveals…”; “We can see that…”). At some point, if you haven’t already, you’ll “orient” your audience to your secondary sources (brief analytical summaries are useful here).

You may offer a first reading of “problematic” passages from Camus on your own. Then you might look more deeply at the passage through the “framework” or “lens” of your secondary source, which offers specific keyterms. Perhaps the secondary source supplies a *contrary or complementary reading* to your first reading. “But if we examine this passage using [insert keyterm from the secondary source], we see something different…” or “But we can also see [an idea from the primary source] determined in part by what [the secondary source] calls [insert keyterm from secondary source].” You might put secondary sources (if working with more than one) to work together or against each other. In any case, you might raise new questions, object to your first interpretation, object to the secondary source theories and keyterms, or make pointed observations of the passage and/or new evidence. This can lead to very provocative thinking in your paper, places where you engage complexity, where you really take risks in relation to existing theories; in applying them to your text you *may come up with a new theory, with new keyterms and concepts*. How should your audience understand the primary text(s)? That’s the question that drives your analysis, which makes up the essay’s middle.

And it’s probably best, most honest and interesting if you think about the complexities of the problem with which your argument still struggles, the intriguing puzzles that remain. And to think of what *complications and counter-arguments* emerge. Again, your secondary sources may help provide you with these elements. Or you might show how their ideas don’t consider complications and counter-arguments that you raise.

*How do you explore counter-arguments?* Think “on the other hand.” Do you use phrases of the “on the other hand” variety? Examples: but, however, on the contrary, paradoxically. What
others exist? A counter-argument can be big (counter-thesis) or small (counterpoint). A good counter-argument is targeted (has a specific focus), is credible, is civil (it doesn’t call the alternative view idiotic), clearly serves your argument (helps you clarify your thesis), unmistakably signals a return to your argument.

See EXAMPLES B and C (page 28); D (page 29)

End (last page)
Function: give your audience a feeling for what they’ve learned.

Essay 2: Let me suggest some possibilities for your conclusion, which, I think, is free of some of the formal fetters demanded of the introduction or the body of a paper.

Your conclusion must demonstrate in some way the significance of what you’ve been writing. It is not a mere restatement of your argument, though it must refer in some way to it. What larger questions, problems or issues does your argument relate to? What other possibilities worth exploring might exist, based on what you’ve been arguing? Your conclusion can be an opportunity to inspire your audience to take up the knowledge you’ve been giving them and to put it to work in their own thinking. Perhaps you can help them think of a problem they can write about, using your paper as a secondary source, full of key terms and new ideas.

What you’ll be thinking: My argument is significant because...; can relate to some larger context...; What remains unclear is...; what we still need to think about is...

See EXAMPLE E (page 27), a conclusion.
EXAMPLE A: an introduction incorporating secondary sources into motive

Mark Twain and Women

What roles did women play in Mark Twain's life, and what roles did Twain assign them in his work? Until recently, most critics who have addressed these questions at all have tended to fall into one of two camps: those who felt women were bad for Twain and those who felt Twain was bad for women. Both of these positions have their supporters, yet each is flawed. The "women were bad for Twain" argument was first voiced by Van Wyck Brooks in his influential 1924 study, The Ordeal of Mark Twain, in which he charged women—and Twain's wife, Livy, in particular—with having censored, bowdlerized, and emasculated Twain's work. "From the moment of his marriage," Twain's "artistic integrity," Brooks wrote, was "virtually destroyed." John Keats, in his 1928 Pulitzer Prize-winning biography, blamed Livy for having forced her bankrupt husband to embark on a grueling schedule of lecturing to pay back his creditors when easier (and, in Livy's view, less ethically and personally justified) means had been available to him. Whether they were editing his prose or editing his person, whether they were running up household expenses that forced Twain to write too much or creating social interactions that allowed him to write too little, women were "bad for Twain." So the argument went.

Although early adherents of Twain, like William Dean Howells and Bernard DeVore, had noted the prominence and presence of women characters in his work, critics didn't begin to consider this issue in depth until the 1970s and 1980s. During those two decades, what one might call the "Twain was bad for women" argument, articulated by critics including Mary Ellen Caud, Judith Fries, Joyce Warren, Emmanuel Dlul, and Wima Garcia, put forth the idea that, as Warren put it, "Mark Twain was unable to portray a woman as a person." And while some critics faulted Twain for having failed to grant women fully realized lives in his fiction, others charged him with having exerted a negative influence on the real women in his life. Harriet Hill claimed that Twain tragically sabotaged the mental and physical health of all of the women in his family. Gay Cardwell accused Twain of having had a prurient interest in the young girls whose company he sought during his final years. Whether he was casting women in stereotypical roles in his fiction or forcing them to play self-effacing or self-destructive supporting roles in his life, Twain, so the argument ran, was "bad for women."

While all of these critics raise interesting and important questions about Twain's attitudes toward women, recent scholarship suggests that a more nuanced, complex perspective on the subject is in order. Twain's relationships with women, both in his life and in his work, were more complicated—and more interesting.

Let us, then, reassess the "women were bad for Twain" argument.

In his autobiography Twain wrote:

In the beginning of our engagement the prospects of my first book, The Innocents Abroad, began to arrive and [Livy] read them with me. She said nothing about the outlay. She was my faithful, industrious, and painstaking editor from that day forth until within three or four months of her death—a streak of more than a third of a century.

Brooks was the first to maintain that Livy's puritanical editing and finitistic view of Twain's writing unleashed Twain's wit, rough-hewn Western prose and sensibilities and raised him as an artist. Just as Mrs. Clemens "had no just sense of the distinction between virility and vulgarity," Brooks complained, she "regarded his natural liking for bold and masculine language, which was one of the outward signs of his latent greatness, merely as a literary equivalent of bad manners, as something that endangered their common prestige in the eyes of conventional opinion."

A fresh look at the record, however, might rewrite a part of that story. In a recent study of Twain's private letters, Michael Swenson notes: "Twain's wife and daughters (and other women whose advice Twain sought) may, indeed, have encouraged and approved of some of his best work. They were also crucial to the production of his greatest works. Women, as it turns out, far from being detrimental to Twain's work, were key to his creative process during his most productive and successful periods as a writer."
EXAMPLE B: a body passage incorporating secondary sources, making space for author’s new position

Mike Davis, *City of Quartz,* from Chapter 1, “Sunshine or No Rain?”

The difficulties of breaking completely free of Los Angeles’s ideological conceits are equally illustrated across the ghettos of Watts and Compton, with the emergence of ‘gangster rap’. George Lipsitz, in his engaging “Cruising Around the Hegemonic Bloc” (1986), has argued that Los Angeles’s spectrum of ethnic rock musicians, muralists, breakdancers, and rappers constitute a kind of ‘organic intellectuals’ forming a cultural strategy for a ‘historical bloc of oppositional groups’. Seemingly confirming this thesis, NWA (Niggers With Attitude) and their lead rapper Eazy-E have sowed confusion in law-and-order circles with the phenomenal popularity of their 1989 albums, ‘Straight Outta Compton’ (500,000 copies) and ‘Easy-Duz-It’ (650,000). Disclaiming recent attempts to whitewash a musical style that was meant to be the authentic sound of the ghetto (‘we make these records for our people first’), NWA are ‘pushing the imagery much further than anyone before them’; ‘[they] feature stress and gunshots as backdrops to their brutal and ugly X-rated tales of drug-dealing, gangbanging and police confrontations’. As Eazy-E explains in his gangster rap has become Los Angeles’s alternative press:

We’re telling the real story of what’s it’s like living in places like Compton. We’re giving [the fans] reality. We’re like reporters. We give them the truth. People where we come from hear so many lies that the truth stands out like a sore thumb.

But one of the most persistent ‘truths’ that NWA report is their own aversion: ‘We’re not making records for the fun of it, we’re in it to make money.’ In contrast to their New York Rap counterparts, Public Enemy (now defunct), who were tribunes of Black nationalism, Los Angeles gangster rap disclaim all the ideological except the primitive accumulation of wealth by any means necessary. In supposedly stripping bare the reality of the streets, ‘telling it like it is’, they also offer an uncritical mirror to fantasy power-trips of violence, sexism and greed. And no more than Charles Bukowski or Frank Gerhy (other purveyors of L.A. ‘social realism’) have the gangster rappers managed to avoid trivialization by becoming celebrities. Surrounded by belligerently grinning white record company execs and PR men, NWA brandish customized assault rifles and talk darkly about recent ‘drive-bys’ and funerals of friends – a ‘polished’ image like any other in the business.

EXAMPLE C: body passage disagreeing with secondary sources

Here’s the critic Adam Gopnik, who writes frequently in *The New Yorker.* He disagrees with a couple of critics (via the move highlighted with italics), that the work of the Irish poet W.H. Auden became overblown when he moved to the United States (from the essay, “The Double Man: Why Auden Is an Indispensable Poet of Our Time”):

This apparent synergy between gangster culture and Hollywood (an old motif) raises some doubts about Lipitz’s thesis of a counter-hegemonic convergence. Writing about another of Los Angeles’s outlaw subcultures, the punk scene of the late 1970s and early 1980s, David James expresses pessimism that any contemporary culture practice, however transitory or marginal, can escape ‘virtually overnight’ assimilation and repackaging by the ‘hegemonic media’. The experience of NWA, and less subtly of the entire burgeoning Colors genre, suggests that Hollywood is eager to mine Los Angeles’s barrios and ghettos for every last lurid image of self-destruction and community holocaust. If the dream factories are equally as happy to manufacture nightmare as idyll, what happens to the oppositional power of documentary realism (a question, of course, that transcends the class struggle over the ideological figuration of Los Angeles)? James’s own bleak answer, informed by Los Angeles case-studies, is that ‘exemplary moments’ of negation can now only be visualized as transient skirmishes at the very margin of culture; resistance becomes permanently ‘conjunctural’.

Somewhere between Lipitz’s Gramscian optimism and James’s Frankfurtian pessimism lies the real possibility of oppositional culture in Los Angeles. As Gramsci almost certainly would have pointed out, a radical structural analysis of the city (as represented by the ‘L.A. School’) can only acquire social force if it is embodied in an alternative experiential vision – in this case, of the huge Los Angeles Third World whose children will be the Los Angeles of the next millennium. In this emerging, poly-ethnic and poly-lingual society – with Anglos a declining minority – the structural conditions of intervention in popular culture are constantly in flux. Who can predict how the long years of struggle which lie ahead, before new Latino immigrants can hope to attain social and political equality, will affect the culture of the Spanish-speaking inner city? Will the city-within-the-city become colonized by a neo-Taiwanese work ethic of thrift and submission, disintegrate into a clockwork-orange of warring gangs, produce an oppositional subculture (like the Yiddish radicalism of ramge New York) – or, perhaps, all three? Equally, will the boundaries between different groups become faultlines of conflict or high-voltage generators of an alternative urban culture led by poly-ethnic vanguards?

[Auden’s] belief in this larger end for poetry, many people have supposed, led him to pontifical gesturing. This was the accusation that both [Randall] Jarrell [an American critic of the mid-century] and [Philip] Larkin [a British poet and critic] levelled at him—that he had become in America a merely rhetorical poet, in love with the sound of his own hobbyhorses and abstractions. “An Elks’ Convention of the capital letters” was how Jarrell dismissed Auden’s ideas, which ended, he said, in “a vague humanitarian mysticism.” There’s something in this—Auden is abstract, and he can be vague. But the abstractions add up. Auden isn’t rhetorical, just intellectual. The rhetorical imagination tries to replace real things with abstract categories. The intellectual poet tries to connect individual cases into a common class. Rhetoric attaches great emotion to what turns out to be, in the end, only a name. Intellect gives names to real emotions. When Auden talks, say, about the “Age of Anxiety,” he is giving a common feeling a proper name.
EXAMPLE D: body passage disagreeing with secondary source

Henry Nash Smith argued many years ago that Twain’s analysis of economics in Connecticut Yankee is one of the several failures of the book, attributable to Twain’s inability to provide the “concrete detail” for a “complex of institutions that had previously been little more than a vague abstraction for him.” Twain’s problem in representing modern economic theories is not, however, his confusion over the “concrete detail,” but his determination of a “progressive” free-trade theory that was already showing in the 1880s its adaptability to the new modes of imperial domination. Since the seventeenth century, free-trade advocates had argued that tariffs and economic parochialism only “wasted” economic energies that should be used to increase the world’s wealth. “Free-trade” theory is central to enlightenment political economies, and Adam Smith’s Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776) is the classic text, especially in its advocacy of the coordination of free trade with what might be termed a global “division of labor,” or specialization by region or nation in modes of production best suited to it. Since Morgan and Twain clearly agree that free trade will help maximize the wealth of a united “England,” bring an end to its sixth-century division into many “tributary kingdoms” (i.e., “colonies”), and do so by awakening serfs (i.e., “workers”) to their rights over their own labor and thus to their roles in negotiating appropriate wages for that labor.

EXAMPLE E: a conclusion with summary paragraph and “speculative” paragraph

Sometimes Twain reinscribed the gender norms of his time; sometimes he transcended them. Just as Twain’s own work embodies and reflects in key ways inconsistencies and ambiguities that inhered in the society that shaped him and that he, in turn, helped shape, the critical controversies that have grown up around Twain and women in the twentieth century reveal much about American society’s complex responses to questions involving gender and culture, and to the role of real and imagined women in a canonical male writer’s work.

There remains a whole range of questions on this subject that have never been asked, let alone answered. While we are beginning to probe the ways in which women influenced Twain’s writing, we have yet to explore how Twain’s work, in turn, shaped writing by women. Twain served as a writing teacher for Gertrude Stern (according to Alice B. Toklas, he was her favorite writer), for Tillie Olsen (who admired the moral sharpness of his essays), for Elizabeth Spencer (who was intrigued by his evocation of a South that she was trying to limn on her own), and for Toni Morrison (who appreciated his ability to write books that “talked”). Reading Huckleberry Finn, did they and other women readers and writers find themselves identifying with Huck rather than with the female characters in the novel (much as Ralph Ellison found himself identifying with Huckle rather than with Jim)? If so, were they “resisting readers” (to use Judith Fetterley’s term)? Or did they embrace, for the moment, an ungendered identity as “reader” or “fellow writer”? What other twentieth-century women writers found in Twain’s vernacular picturesque hero or in his ironic authorial persona an empowering role model? Did Maxine Hong Kingston read Twain? Did Rita Mae Brown read Huckle? Did Molly Ivins read Twain? Did Dorothy Parker read Twain? Did Eudora Welty read Twain? Gloria Naylor? Who was energized by his satire? Outraged by his limitations? Inspired by his wit? Exhilarated by his invention? Exhilarated by his rage? Energized by his prose style? Liberated by his irreverence? What Twain did to them, and what did they take from him? Who found her own voice by listening to him?

Perhaps, as the next century approaches, we will begin to understand more fully what Twain has meant to women readers and writers in this one. Like the book Huckle’s thumbed through in the Grangerford’s parlor, this question promises to be “interesting but tough.”
Elements and Methods 7: How Analytical Paragraphs Work

Elements of the Essay that May Play a Role in Paragraphs
- Structure (logical, progressive order—paragraphs make that order)
- Evidence (including quotations)
- Analysis (including close reading)
- Sources (quotations, keyterms)
- Keyterms (from primary and secondary sources)
- Orienting
- Stitching
- Reflecting (“pulling back” to consider complications, counter-arguments)
- Style

A Good Paragraph May Include:
- Topic/Transition sentence: reflects thesis, which itself projects into paragraph
- Evidence and Analysis: one of the varieties of close reading
- Secondary Source: an authority to help persuade or to provide point of disagreement
- Keyterms: recurring terms or “conceptual oppositions”
- Internal Logic (from Preceptor Tony Brown):
  - Premise
  - Conclusion
  - Premise
  - Intermediate Conclusion
  - Conclusion

  Premise: proposition upon which an argument is based, a conclusion drawn
  - Premise: proposition upon which an argument is based, a conclusion drawn

  Words and phrases that signal a premise:
  - since as indicated by
  - because the reason is
  - for follows from
  - while may be inferred from/is implied by
  - inasmuch as as illustrated/demonstrated/shown by

  Conclusion: proposition that follows a premise
  - Conclusion: proposition that follows a premise

  Words and phrases that signal conclusions:
  - therefore as indicated by
  - hence it follows that
  - thus we may infer that
  - so which means/implies/suggests that
  - accordingly which shows that
  - consequently proves that
  - as a result for this reason
Mapping Logic

Break up each of the passages below into numbered statements. Which statement or statements is a premise; which is a conclusion? Write the numbers down and draw arrows between each to show which statement leads to another.

Examples:

1. The time for a national high-speed railroad system has come. Airlines cannot keep up with consumer demand, and in their attempts to do so have subjected passengers to increasingly poor service. The upkeep costs of the heavily traveled inter-state highways are soaring.

2. Since morals [...] have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows that they cannot be derived from reason; [...] because reason alone, as we have already prov'd, can never have any such influence.

3. What was striking was that every politician or journalist I talked to [...] claimed that Egyptian young people would not want to fight again [...]. Moreover, the widening of the Suez Canal is now going forward and the cities on its banks are being rebuilt. A nation planning to make war would not be likely to block its route of attack in this way.

4. The death penalty is further warranted because it is the only practical way to make certain that a murderer will not repeat his crime. Under today's permissive, revolving-door justice, it is almost an everyday occurrence to read where a convicted murderer, after serving a relatively short sentence, has killed again.

5. The lower strata of the middle class—the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen general, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat, partly because their diminutive capital does not suffice for the scale on which modern industry is carried on, and is swamped in the competition with the large capitalists, partly because their specialized skill is rendered worthless by new methods of production. Thus, the proletariat is recruited from all classes of the population.
Examples of the Elements at Work 4: Paragraph Logic, Coherence and Style

Example A: A Published Historian
Below is a paragraph from an essay, “The Trouble with Wilderness,” by the American historian William Cronon, whose scholarly work is particularly concerned with the environment and our ideas about it (see his excellent book on Chicago, *Nature’s Metropolis*). In this paragraph Cronon provides broad historical context, very specific orienting, for the concept of “wilderness.” In doing so he invokes his motive for writing. The paragraph has been broken into its component sentences, which are out of order. But the logical relationship between the sentences, apparent in the ideas they contain and the words and phrases that make them cohere should make it easy for you to put the paragraph back together in logical order.

Summary of preceding paragraphs:
Cronon gives a brief history of how unsettled areas were transformed in the American imagination from hellish, frightening places in the eighteenth century to pastoral, idyllic places in the nineteenth.

End of preceding paragraph:
For Muir and the growing number of Americans who shared his views, Satan’s home had become God’s own temple.

New Paragraph:
1. That is why its influence is so pervasive and, potentially, so insidious.

2. The sources of this rather astonishing transformation were many. [This is actually the first sentence of the new paragraph.]

3. The two converged to remake wilderness in their own image, freighting it with moral values and cultural symbols that it carries to this day.

4. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the modern environmental movement is itself a grandchild of romanticism and post-frontier ideology, which is why it is no accident that so much environmental discourse takes its bearings from the wilderness these intellectual movements helped create.

5. Of the two, the sublime is the older and more pervasive cultural construct, being one of the most important expressions of that broad transatlantic movement we today label as romanticism.

6. Although wilderness may today seem to be just one environmental concern among many, it in fact serves as the foundation for a long list of other such concerns that on their face seem quite remote from it.

7. But for the purposes of this essay they can be gathered under two broad headings: the sublime and the frontier.

8. The frontier is more peculiarly American, though it too had its European and parallels.

Beginning of following paragraph:
To gain such a remarkable influence, the concept of wilderness had to become loaded with some of the deepest core values of the culture that created and idealized it: it had to become sacred. (72-3)

Example B: A Published Literary Critic
Below is a five-sentence paragraph from the literary critic Edward Said's “Two Visions of Africa in Heart of Darkness” that has been “decomposed” into its component statements, though these statements appear in order. Your task is to “recompose” it into a coherent and unified paragraph by reassembling the statements into compound sentences. Be sure to make the logic between sentences as clear as possible by adding appropriate transitional phrases and connecting words. Feel free to change the structure of the statements in any way you like, but be careful not to change their significance when doing so.

1. Conrad is different from the other colonial writers who were his contemporaries.

   Conrad was self-conscious about what he did.

   Colonialism turned him, a Polish expatriate, into an employee of the imperial system.

2. *Heart of Darkness* cannot just be a straightforward recital of Marlow's adventures.

   *Heart of Darkness* is a dramatization of Marlow himself, the former wanderer in colonial regions, telling his story to a group of British listeners at a particular time and in a specific place.

3. This group of people is drawn largely from the business world.

   Conrad wants to emphasize that during the 1890s the business of empire, once an adventurous and often individualistic enterprise, had become the empire of business.

4. At about the same time Halford Mackinder, an explorer, geographer, and Liberal Imperialist, gave a series of lectures on imperialism at the London Institute of Bankers.

5. Marlow's narrative leaves us with a quite accurate sense that there is no way out of the sovereign historical force of imperialism.

   Marlow's narrative leaves us with the sense that imperialism has the power of a system representing as well as speaking for everything within its dominion.

   Conrad shows us that what Marlow does is contingent, acted out for a set of like-minded British hearers, and limited to that situation. (25-6)

Example C: Paragraph Logic with Secondary Sources
This passage concerns an argument about a new way to see contracts, a vital part of the arcane world of the law. It comes from a book by the well-known legal scholar Patricia Williams, *The Alchemy of Race and Rights*. Where are the premises and conclusions? Keyterms?

One consequence of this broader reconfiguration of rights [a world in which a broader range of inanimate objects are given rights] is to give voice to those people or things that, by virtue of their object relation to a contract, historically have had no voice. Allowing this sort of empowering opens up the *egoïsme à deux* of traditional contract and increases the limited bipolarity of a relationship that characterizes so much of western civilization.¹ Listening to and looking for interests beyond the narrowest boundaries of linear, dualistically reciprocal encounters is characteristic of gift relationships, networks of encompassing expectation and support. As my colleague Dinesh Khosla describes it, “In the circularity of gift, the wealth of a community never loses its momentum. It passes from one hand to another; it does not gather in isolated pools. So all have it, even though they do not possess it and even though they do not own it.”² (161)

Example D: Sample Student Paragraph Needing Revision
Your task is to revise this paragraph into a coherent, unified paragraph. What is the topic sentence? Can you combine sentences into compound sentences?

Sacks’s boyish curiosity finds wonderment and “startling beauty” (70) in Nature. He reveres and indulges himself in her invariant nature. The repetitive allusion to his literal mother suggests that she is representative of Mother Nature herself, guiding Sacks by the hand and demonstrating her magnificence and power. His dependency on his mother begins from the moment he is conceived. As a child, Sacks questions and observes science in everything his mother shows him, from her diamond ring to the crystal radio. As Sacks matures, he realizes that he can no longer just accept what Mother Nature shows him to be true and begins to experiment to find his own truths: “when I was suddenly abandoned by my parents…my trust in them, my love for them, was rudely shaken, and with this my belief in God too” (60). The relationship drawn between Nature and a maternal figure indicates that Sacks has the utmost respect for Nature. Although he may not necessarily understand or agree with her, he appreciates the nurturing care she has given him and knows that his best interest always lies within her purpose. Nature is his constant source of stability and he dare not influence her “hidden world of mysterious laws and phenomena” (58).


Example E: Paragraph Logic in Close Reading
Here are two paragraphs from an important study of British romantic literature, M. H. Abrams’
The Mirror and the Lamp: Romantic Theory and the Critical Tradition. We’ve examined this
passage already as an example of close reading. Look at its logic again.

In the next century, the Utilitarian opponents of poetry, as we saw, accepted the proposition that
the progress of reason and imagination, of science and poetry, must be inversely related, and merely modulated the threnody
into a song of thanksgiving. One man who was both historian and poet put this theory of cultural history in its most unqualified form, and explicitly on the grounds that the scientific and poetic descriptions of the sensible world are not reconcilable. ‘We think,’ wrote Macaulay in 1825, ‘that, as civilisation advances, poetry almost necessarily declines.’ The progress of knowledge is from ‘particular images to general terms,’ and from concrete perception to generalization, but ‘analysis is not the business of the poet. His office is to portray, not to dissect.’ After his pedantic fashion, Macaulay leaves us no alternative. No person in these enlightened times can write or even enjoy poetry ‘without a certain unsoundness of mind.’ The truth of poetry is ‘the truth of madness. The reasonings are just; but the premises are false.’

We cannot unite the incompatible advantages of reality and deception, the clear discernment of truth and the exquisite enjoyment of fiction.22

In this historical context, we can discriminate the separate strands in Keats’s indictment of science in Lamia.

Do not all charms fly
At the mere touch of cold philosophy?
There was an awful rainbow once in heaven:
We know her roof, her texture; she is given
In the dull catalogue of common things.
Philosophy will clip an Angel’s wings,
Conquer all mysteries by rule and line,
Empty the haunted air, and gnomed mine—
Unweave a rainbow, as it were while made
The tender-person’d Lamia melt into a shade.

First, cold philosophy dispels the charms of myth and fairy-lore—it empties ‘the haunted air, and gnomed mine’—but like Hurd and Warton, Keats cannot agree with James Thomson that such materials are easily spared. Also, philosophy breaks down the rainbow into its physical components and causes; ‘we know her roof, her texture,’ and this knowledge ‘unweaves’ the rainbow, and substitutes a dull, abstract thing for the beauty and mystery of concrete perception. In maintaining, with Lamb, that Newton ‘had destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing it to the prismatic colors,’ Keats accedes to the fallacy (in which he has been joined by numerous professional philosophers) that, when a perceptual phenomenon is explained by correlating it with something more elementary than itself, the explanation discredits and replaces the perception—that only the explanation is real, and the perception illusory. And to Keats, if not to Thomson, the ability to versify and dramatize the new scientific ‘truths’ was no adequate payment for the ‘life of sensations,’ and the ‘indolent’ surrender to the sensuous concrete which is integral to his characteristic poetry.
Elements and Methods 8: On Style and Imitation

Immature poets imitate; mature poets steal.
T. S. Eliot

**Compound Sentences**
The Art of Styling Sentences Handout, Pattern 1: Compound Sentence with semicolon, no conjunction.
- Example: The vicuña is a gentle animal living in the central Andes; its fleece often becomes the fabric for expensive coats.

- Example (with series): But it is illusion to think that there is anything fragile about the life of the earth; surely this is the toughest membrane imaginable in the universe, opaque to probability, impermeable to death. (Lewis Thomas, “The World’s Biggest Membrane”)

The Art of Styling Sentences Handout, Pattern 1b: Same as above, but with a coordinating conjunction (also a connector), such as and, or, for, but, nor, yet, so.
- Example: It was snowing outside, and in the building Harold felt safe; he dreaded leaving his shelter for the long, dangerous trip home.

**Sentences with Series**
- Example: Yet underlying Marlow's inclusiveness, his evasions, his arabile meditation on his feelings and ideas, is the unrelenting course of the journey itself, which, despite all the many obstacles, is sustained through the jungle, through time, through hardship, to the heart of it all, Kurtz's ivory trading empire. (Edward Said, “Two Visions in Heart of Darkness”)

The Art of Styling Sentences Handout, Pattern 6: An Introductory Series of Appositives (echoed idea or second naming), with a dash and a summarizing subject.
- Example: Foresight, humor, wit—all are evident in Omar Khayyam's Rubiayat.

The Art of Styling Sentences Handout, Pattern 8: Dependent Clauses in a Pair or in a Series (at beginning or end of sentences)
- Example: In Biology 50, Stella learned that a hummingbird does not really hum, that a screech owl actually whistles, and that storks prefer to wade in water than fly around carrying tiny babies.

**Repetition**
The Art of Styling Sentences Handout, Pattern 9a: Same word (an adjective, adverb, preposition, noun, modifying word, intensifier, or verb) repeated in parallel structure
- Example: The South Pacific island is an isolated community—isolated from the values of the West, isolated from the spiritual heritage of the East.

**Short, Simple Sentences for Effect** (even a “punchline” effect). This is often good following a long sentence in a paragraph centered on a complicated idea.
- Example: “Despite their European names and mannerisms, Conrad's narrators are not average unreflecting witnesses of European imperialism. They do not simply accept what goes on in the name of the imperial idea: they think about it a lot, they worry about it, they are actually quite anxious about whether they can make it seem like a routine thing. But it never is. (Said 32)
Try these
T. S. Eliot, “Tradition and the Individual Talent” (1919)
No poet, no artist of any sort, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is
the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone; you must
set him, for contrast and comparison, among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic, not
mere historical, criticism.

But it is illusion to think that there is anything fragile about the life of the earth; surely this is the
toughest membrane imaginable in the universe, opaque to probability, impermeable to death. We are
the delicate part, transient and vulnerable as cilia. Nor is it a new thing for man to invent an
existence that he imagines to be above the rest of life; this has been his most consistent intellectual
exertion down the millennia. As illusion, it has never worked out to his satisfaction in the past, any
more than it does today. Man is embedded in nature.

Joan Didion, “The White Album” (1979)
We look for the sermon in the suicide, for the social of moral lesson in the murder of five. We
interpret what we see, select the most workable of the multiple choices. We live entirely, especially if
we are writers, by the imposition of a narrative line upon disparate images, by the “ideas” with
which we have learned to freeze the shifting phantasmagoria which is our actual experience.