

# UPPER SCHOOL STYLE GUIDE

Preparing Students for Ethical Leadership in a  
Diverse and Global Society



## OAK HALL SCHOOL

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## The Oak Hall School Style Guide

This Style Guide is intended for the use of Oak Hall School students as they master the fundamental skills of good writing. OHS students should plan to use this guide to supplement the instruction from their classes; it is not intended to replace the tried-and-true method of asking teachers for assistance in learning the difficult process of writing polished, clear, and grammatically correct English. Additionally, students should focus on the art of writing well in all disciplines, not just in English class. We hope this guide will enhance the writing of our students and aid them when we, the faculty, are not present to provide direct instruction.

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## I. Conjunctions

The co-ordinating conjunctions are the following: and, but, or, nor, for, and yet. (“For” and “yet” can only join clauses.)

The correlative conjunctions are always in pairs. They are: either-or, neither-nor, both-and, not only-but also, and whether-or.

Some common subordinate conjunctions are: after, although, as, as if, as long as, as much as, as soon as, as though, because, before, so that, than, even if, even though, how, if, inasmuch, in order that, lest, now that, provided (that), since, that, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, wherever, and while.

Watch out for compound sentences without transitions (i.e., a comma splice).

Ex: *I enjoyed the football game last night, it was exciting.* ☹

### Corrected:

*I enjoyed the football game last night because it featured an exciting finale.* ☺

*I enjoyed the football game last night; it featured an exciting finale.* ☺

*I enjoyed the football game last night. It featured an exciting finale.* ☺

Ex.: *Tommy, Joey, and Susie went to the mall, where they shopped and ate ice cream, also they played video games.* ☹

### Corrected:

*Tommy, Joey, and Susie went to the mall, where they shopped and ate ice cream. Also, they played video games.* ☺

## II. Simple, Compound, and Complex Sentences

Simple Sentences contain a subject and a verb (and typically, but don't have to, feature adjoining adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions).

Ex.: *Tasha drove to work.*

*I am tired.*

Compound Sentences contain two independent clauses (i.e., phrases that could, if broken up, serve as sentences on their own) connected by a coordinating conjunction.

Ex.: *I want to eat a snack, but first I have to finish this assignment.*  
*Josie went to the beach, and she surfed in the choppy waves.*

Complex Sentences contain one independent clause and a dependent clause, which is a phrase that cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Ex.: *While I waited for my lunch to be prepared, I checked my text messages.*  
Note how the first half of the sentence—a dependent clause—would be a sentence fragment on its own, due to the conjunction “while.”

Sentences can also be Compound-Complex, which means they have two independent clauses and at least one dependent clause.

Ex.: *Although my eyes hurt, I must finish this assignment now, or I will never complete it on time.*  
Note the dependent clause starting with “Although” is followed by two independent clauses, connected by the coordinating conjunction “or.”

### III. Punctuation

These transitions typically appear before a comma:

Therefore,	Nonetheless,	Thus,	Indeed,
However,	In addition,	Consequently,	Regardless,

These typically show up after the comma (i.e., coordinating conjunctions):

, and                      , yet                      , but

These can either start a sentence (provided there is a clause in the second half of the sentence), or appear as a clause after the comma (subordinate):

, since	Since ...,
, despite	Despite ...,
, although	Although ...,

, because                      Because ...,  
, due to                      Due to ...,

Ex.: *Since I am from Brooklyn, NY, I root for the Mets.* ☺  
*I root for the Mets, since I am from Brooklyn, NY.* ☺  
*Although my cousins all root for the Yankees.* ☹

Note how the last example is a fragment since “Although” denotes a dependent clause.

Note: It is common practice to use coordinating conjunctions to start a sentence, but such syntax should not be overused.

Ex.: *The vast sweep of history teaches us that social change comes slowly. But in fighting for social justice, one should also consider the needs of the here and the now.*

Note that this example could have been written as one sentence, with a comma after “slowly.” It is acceptable to start a sentence with a dependent clause starting with “but,” provided there is a comma at the end of said clause.

### **Essential and Non-Essential Details**

Note how bookended commas signify non-essential details, whereas an essential clause (without commas) introduces crucial details that specify the subject.

Ex.: **Essential:**

*The man who bent to pick up his bag split the seam of his pants.*

*The test that we are taking tomorrow will cover Chapter 4.*

**Non-Essential:**

*Maya Angelou, who is from Stamps, Arkansas, writes about her southern upbringing.*

*A former student of mine, who went to UF, loved to write about sports.*

### **Dashes**

Dashes can be used to control the tone or rhythm of an aside when marking nonessential details in the middle of a sentence.

Ex.: *Because Tim is an undisciplined player—often being penalized with avoidable red cards—he always leaves his teammates having to play shorthanded.*

*Freddy Adu—who, by the way, never made it to the US World Cup side—is one example of a hyped young talent who became a bust.*

### **Commas and Semi-Colons in Lists**

When you list items while also describing them individually, use semi-colons in between each item and detail.

Ex.: *To get in shape, try these exercises: sit-ups, to build stomach muscles; pull-ups, to increase arm and back strength; and jump rope, for cardiovascular and quickness improvement.*

*When I go the movies I have a common routine: first, I use the electronic ticket dispenser, to avoid lines; next, I scan my frequent moviegoer card, to get free popcorn; and finally, I sit in the front seat of the second row, for more leg room.*

### **Oxford Commas**

The Oxford comma is the optional final comma (preceding the conjunction) at the end of a list of three or more details.

Ex.: *I have lived in Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico.*  
*I have lived in Hawaii, Alaska and Puerto Rico.*

Either format is correct; however, we recommend the use of Oxford commas, as it helps avoid potential confusion in sentence formation / details.

Ex.: *Most of all in this world, I admire my family, rocker Bob Dylan and artist Frieda Kahlo.*

Note how without an Oxford comma (before “and”), the implication is that Dylan and Kahlo are your family.

### **Using Colons**

Colons are most often used to introduce lists of three or more items / actions.

Ex.: *When you go the grocery store, please pick up the following items: milk, croutons, bologna, and pork rinds.*

In addition, colons can also be used to introduce a rule or generalized statement or to set up a “dramatic” declaration within a sentence.

Ex: *I really wanted to accomplish one thing at the ballgame: catch a home run ball.*  
*There's an easy way to ensure success in school: never let social priorities outweigh academic ones.*

#### IV. Effective Transition Phrases

<b>Addition</b>	specifically	since
furthermore	for instance	on account of
moreover	as an illustration	for that reason
in addition	e.g., (for example)	<b>Effect</b>
next	for example	therefore
further	<b>Comparison</b>	consequently
last, lastly	in the same way	accordingly
finally	by the same token	thus
<b>Time</b>	similarly	hence
while	in like manner	as a result
immediately	likewise	<b>Intensification</b>
never	in similar fashion	indeed
after	<b>Contrast</b>	by all means
when	although	of course
soon	yet	certainly
whenever	despite	undoubtedly
meanwhile	nevertheless	in fact
sometimes	nonetheless	surely
in the meantime	after all	<b>Concession</b>
during	however	to be sure
now, until now	though	granted
following	otherwise	of course, it is true
at length	on the contrary	<b>Summary</b>
simultaneously	in contrast	to summarize
thus far	notwithstanding	in sum
subsequently	on the other hand	in brief
<b>Exemplification or</b>	at the same time	<b>Conclusion</b>
<b>Illustration</b>	regardless	in conclusion
to illustrate	<b>Cause</b>	to conclude
to demonstrate	because	finally

## Conjunctive Adverbs (Adverbial Conjunctions)

These transitions connect actions and events.

accordingly	however	nonetheless
also	indeed	otherwise
besides	instead	similarly
consequently	likewise	still
conversely	meanwhile	subsequently
finally	moreover	then
furthermore	nevertheless	therefore
hence	next	thus

## V. Subject-Verb Agreement

In English, subjects and verbs must agree with each other in number. In a sentence featuring an action verb, the subject of a sentence is the noun or pronoun that is the ‘doer’ of the action the sentence is describing, and the verb is the action being done.

In a sentence featuring a linking verb, the subject is the noun or pronoun that is being described, and the verb is the word that connects the subject to the adjective(s) that follow. In order to write well, you should always be able to identify the subject and the verb of a sentence.

	Linking verbs	Action verbs
Present tense plural	<i>They are bored.</i>	<i>They walk.</i>
Present tense singular	<i>She is bored.</i>	<i>She walks.</i>

Tips:

Identify your subject and verb first. Ignore what's inside the prepositional phrases.

Ex.: *The members of the team meet every day at 3:30.*

Questions can be flipped, syntactically, for easier identification of subject / verb agreement.

Ex.: *Are they driving us to the game?* changes to *They are driving us to the game.*

*Is Deray or Michelle going to pick us up?* changes to *Either Deray or Michelle is going to pick us up.*

The conjunction “and” usually signifies plural subjects. “Or” typically reflects a singular subject.

Ex.: *Bart and Lisa are at the movies.*

*Either Krusty or Sideshow Bob squirts you with water.*

“Neither / nor” is singular, just like “or.” “Both / and” is plural, the same as “and.”

Ex.: *Neither Tony nor Murtaza is going to the party tonight.*

*Both Susan and Marco are working late tonight.*

Watch out for “and” occasionally applied to a singular subject--i.e., the connected phrases are both adjectives for that subject.

Ex.: *My historical hero and role model is Bayard Rustin.*

*My pet cat and best friend in the world is named Snowball.*

### **Subject / Verb Agreement Exceptions**

Group nouns are singular.

Ex.: *Physics is my hardest class.*

*The news from Wall Street is dire.*

Titles (movies, books, TV, etc.) are singular.

Ex.: *The Lord of the Rings is getting yet another re-release.*

“Paired” items are plural.

Ex.: *The goggles are purple.*

*The scissors are too dull.*

## VI. Six Troublesome Verbs

These verb forms are often confused due to their similar nature:

	Infinitive	Simple Past	Past Participle
Transitive (i.e., features an object):	to lay	laid	laid
Intransitive:	to lie	lay	lain
Transitive:	to raise	raised	raised
Intransitive:	to rise	rose	risen
Transitive:	to set	set	set
Intransitive:	to sit	sat	sat

Ex.: *Transitive: I laid the backpack under my desk.*

*Intransitive: Katrina lay down to take a nap.*

*Transitive: Wonder Woman can easily raise this tank over her head.*

*Intransitive: The boxer rose from the mat before the referee counted to ten.*

## VII. Pronoun Forms

These pronouns are always singular:

anybody	every	nobody	somebody	each
anyone	everybody	no one	someone	either
anything	everyone	nothing	something	neither
	everything	one		

These are always plural:

both	many	few	several	others
------	------	-----	---------	--------

These are singular or plural, depending on the situation:

all	more	none
any	most	some

Ex.: *At AM assembly, everybody in their seats is listening, correct?*

*Many of the birds are singing outside.*

*Some of the students are studying in groups for the test.*

*Some of the pizza is left over from last night.*

Note how the two last examples both feature the pronoun “Some,” but one is plural while the other is singular, due to the details within the preposition phrases.

## Personal Pronouns

Here are the forms of personal pronouns, followed by some example sentences:

Number	person	gender	personal pronouns	
			subject	object
singular	1st	male/female	I	me
	2nd	male/female	you	you
	3rd	male	he	him
		female	she	her
		neuter	it	it
Plural	1st	male/female	we	us
	2nd	male/female	you	you
	3rd	male/female/neuter	they	them

Ex: *I like coffee.*  
*John helped me.*  
*He runs fast.*  
*Did Randy beat him?*  
*She is clever.*  
*Does Mary know her?*  
*We went home.*  
*Anthony drove us.*  
*They played doubles.*  
*John and Maria beat them.*

### **Possessive Pronouns**

Certain pronouns, called possessive pronouns, show ownership. Some are used alone; some describe a noun.

Used alone: mine, yours, his, hers, ours, theirs

Ex.: *That computer is hers.*

Modifying a noun: my, your, his, her, its, our, their, whose

Ex.: *That is her computer.*

Please note that none of the possessive pronouns is spelled with an apostrophe. For example, “it’s” always means “it is,” not to be confused with the possessive form of a neuter noun (e.g., “*Grits are Southern cooking at its best.*”). Similarly, “who’s” always means “who is.”

### **Using Who / Whom (the relative / interrogative pronoun)**

“Who” is the subject of the sentence. It’s a pronoun comparable to “he” or “she”.

Ex.: *Who wrote the essay? She wrote the essay.*

“Whom” is the object of a verb or proposition. It works the same way as “him” or “her.”

Ex.: *They called whom last night? They called him.*

Rule of thumb: Ask yourself if the noun that who / whom is referring back to (the antecedent) is the one doing the action or the one receiving the action.

Ex.: *Whom did you ask for directions? You asked her! ☺*

*Who gave you directions? He gave them to you! ☺*

*Who are you giving a ride to? You got a ride from him!* ☹️

Note how the last example should use “whom”, since that person is receiving a ride from you (i.e., he or she is the object).

### **Common use of “they”, “their”, or “theirs” as singular pronouns**

Within formal / conventional grammar, these pronouns should only be used for plural subjects. If you are talking about a singular subject but are not sure of the gender of the person, you should use “he or she” or “his or her.” However, it is common practice in spoken language to apply such pronouns in cases where the subject is singular and an unidentified gender.

Ex.: *The class is stressed out because they have a test tomorrow.* ☺️

*Some student is probably extra anxious right now, because he or she left behind a stack of review notes under a desk in the classroom!* ☺️

*Hopefully, whichever student left their book here will come back later.* ☹️

Note how the last sentence should use “his or her” rather than “their”, but such use is acceptable in informal settings.

## **VIII. Misplaced and Dangling Modifiers**

### **Misplaced Modifiers**

Examine these sentences, noting how amended modifiers clearly connect the subjects to the ideas they relate to:

Ex.: *Bobby brought in the photos that he had taken on vacation to school.* ☹️

*Bobby brought in to school the photos that he had taken on vacation.* ☺️

*The photos were of zebras and lions from Africa, which he put on the projector.* ☹️

*The safari explorer put on the projector photos that he had taken on vacation.*

☺

*He went on a safari he explained to the class with a tour guide.* ☹

*He went on a safari with a tour guide, he explained to the class.* ☺

*Then his father had to fend off a hippo with a plastic spork.* ☹

*His father had to fend off with a plastic spork a hippo.* ☺

### **Dangling Modifiers**

Examine these sentences, noting how the amended sentences clearly connect the verbal phrase at the beginning of the sentence to the proper subject (the acting person/ agent being described) IMMEDIATELY following the comma.

Ex.: *Having finished her homework, the PlayStation was turned on.* ☹

*Having finished her homework, Susie turned on the PlayStation.* ☺

*After reading the whole book, the complex themes were still difficult to decipher.* ☹

*After reading the whole book, Brandon still had difficulty deciphering the themes.* ☺

## **IX. Common Grammatical Errors**

### **Fewer vs. Less**

“Fewer” is used for plural nouns (nouns for things that can be counted), and “less” is used for singular (collective) nouns. Note that time, money, distance, and weight are all typically described in singular terms.

Ex.: *There were fewer than ten people in the auditorium tonight.*

*There is less ice cream in this freezer than there was before.*

*Having fewer coins means you have less money.*

### **Every day vs. Everyday**

The word “everyday” is an adjective used to describe things that (1) occur every day, or (2) are ordinary or commonplace. The phrase “every day” features an adjective (every) modifying a noun (day), and it is typically used as an adverbial modifier.

Ex.: *Hygienic items like toothbrushes and bath soaps are for everyday use.*  
*The cross-country runners put in eight miles every day to prepare for the meet.*

### **That vs. Which**

“That” sets up Essential Phrases, and “which” introduces Non-Essential Phrases (phrases differentiated by commas on both ends).

Ex.: *An event that shook the world was when Bob discovered time travel.*  
*The team, which hailed from Atlanta, travelled five hours to attend the match.*

### **Their vs. There vs. They’re**

“Their” indicates possession.

Ex.: *Their dog is missing.*

“There” indicates location.

Ex.: *Your notebook is over there, under the desk*

“They’re” is the abbreviation for “they are.”

Ex.: *They’re tired this morning because they were up late last night.*

### **Relative and Interrogative Pronouns**

The relative pronoun (who, which, that) is used to refer back to an antecedent. In general, “who” refers to a person, and “which” and “that” refer to objects.

Ex.: *The book that I read last summer was edifying.*  
*The girl, who is walking down the hallway, has blond hair.*

When the relative pronoun (who) becomes the object (of a preposition or a verb), it changes its form to whom.

- Ex.: The boy to whom you gave the cookie is very happy.  
 The men, whom we see in the crowd, are going to the stadium.  
 This is the player about whom I was talking.

The Interrogative Pronoun follows the same rules, but it asks a question.

- Ex.: Whom do you like? ☺  
 Who do you like? ☹  
 To whom were you telling the story? ☺

**Affect vs. Effect**

Affect	Effect
In its most common usage, "affect" is a verb meaning to make an impact on something.	In its most common usage, "effect" is a noun, and it is usually followed by the preposition "on"; it is the result or outcome of a cause / experience.
As a noun, the word "affect" relates to the display of emotion (related to the word affection).	As a verb, "to effect" means to bring about (most commonly: to effect change). Remember, it is a transitive verb.
Ex.: V: He affected the game immensely when he hit five three pointers in two minutes.	Ex. N: The effect of his three pointers was changing an eight-point deficit to a seven-point lead for his team.
N: The actor's affect of sorrow was a bit over the top, but it fit the character's raw emotional state.	V: The movement "Black Lives Matter" attempts to effect change to what they perceive to be racial injustice in law enforcement systems.

## X. Proofreading Marks

Mark	Meaning	Example
	Delete	The <del>the</del> keyboard
	Close up, no space	The Key board
	Delete and close up	The micro processor
#	Insert space	call forwarding
^	Insert word or letter	call forwarding
	Transpose	frequencies travel
↑	Insert comma	The keyboard when
○	Insert period	Set up the keyboard
∨	Insert apostrophe	The keyboard's location
⊙	Insert colon	Collect the following
⋈	Insert semicolon	the keyboard; however
=	Insert hyphen	forty-four
↕	Insert quotation marks	a feature phone
stet...	Restore to original	converting the system
¶ No ¶	Start new paragraph or no paragraph intended if preceded by "no"	Reserve the order. ¶ The No ¶ Reserve the order. The
≡	Capitalize	The microphone
/	Lower case	The Microphone
€ →	Parentheses	the two parts (microphone and speakers) are
[ ]	Brackets	"to the [chosen] site"
○	Spell out	has approx four uses
	Align	Microphone keyboard speaker
[	Move left	[ microphone
]	Move right	microphone ]
∨	Superscript	x <sup>∨</sup>
^	Subscript	y <sub>^</sub>

## **XI. Writing for Concision**

Most professional writers would say that good writing is concise writing. Many young writers use two or three words when they should use one. Here are a few examples of good, concise writing:

Ex.: *Not only did Mary Shelley's Frankenstein go against the fundamental views of science, but it also challenged the religious norms of the Enlightenment by placing humans as the creators of life instead of God.*

Try in your writing to use one word instead of two. For instance, use "combat" or "reject" instead of "go against." This practice will bring concision and cogency to your prose.

Ex.: *Europe recoiled against rational thinking in the early to mid-19th century.*

The choice of the word "recoiled" provides a vivid image and demonstrates the power that a single word can have in explaining a complex idea.

Ex.: *Although King Henry VIII was motivated by personal desires and Martin Luther was spurred by religious conviction, both men brought about religious reform by splitting the Catholic Church and defying Papal authority.*

Here, instead of "brought about" say "engendered" or "inspired."

Bloated example:

*The myth of the Lost Cause has become central to American culture in the century and a half since the Civil War; we see it in movies ranging from Gone with the Wind and The Outlaw Josie Wales to Serenity, where heroic individualist characters battle against oppressive and overwhelming but also obscure government agents, but we also see it in education curricula, where some schools still use textbooks that depict the antebellum South as a resister of Northern political overreach than an active defender of slavery.*

Concise example:

*From films such as Gone with the Wind or Serenity to school curricula, mainstream American culture continues to romanticize the Lost Cause of the South and downplay the role of slavery in the Civil War.*

Note how the concise example improves clarity and effect by eliminating explanations that do not add to the meaning of the sentence.

## **XII. Constructing Formal Arguments**

### **Thesis Statement**

A thesis statement serves as the centerpiece of any essay or paper. It clearly proposes an argument (not a summary) that the rest of the piece will then set out to support through analysis and evidence. Within the introduction, the writer also typically (but not always) introduces the supporting subtopics. Young writers should make the thesis of a paragraph the first sentence of that paragraph.

Examples of Strong Thesis Statements:

*Through their unconventional poetic styles and themes on nature, the Romantic poets attempted to challenge what they perceived to be the dangers of Industrialization and urban blight.*

*Due to the ominous and intimidating rhetoric of such African-American militants as the Black Panther Party and the Nation of Islam, the (relatively) attractive policies of peace and reconciliation from the SCLC were eventually accepted and then enacted by cautious political leaders in the 1960's.*

Note how these two thesis statements pose an argument from which the writer will draw out her case.

Examples of Weak Thesis Statements:

*Byron, Shelley, and Keats were three key Romantic writers who wrote about such topics as reverence of nature, the power of imagination, and the dangers of Industrialism.*

*The Civil Rights era featured more militant voices from the likes of Malcolm X and Elijah Mohammad, and leaders like Edgar Mevers and Dr. King, who preached forgiveness and problem-solving.*

Note how these are not persuasive in nature; they offer a generalized topical summary, i.e., they suggest an expository function within the paper.

## Argument-Driven Thesis Sentences

Each body paragraph should make an argument. Therefore, every sentence that leads a paragraph should be an argument-driven thesis sentence. The thesis sentences for individual body paragraphs all contribute to building the paper's larger thesis.

Ex.: *Economically, both Egypt and Mesopotamia are the products of the Agricultural Revolution, and, more specifically, both civilizations made use of the rivers on which they are based: the Nile for Egypt and the Tigris and Euphrates for Mesopotamia.*

This is a well-written and argumentative thesis sentence on the question of comparing Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Ex.: *Socio-political reform occurred in all parts of Asia after WWI because of the nationalistic feelings it produced.*

This sentence makes a clear argument about social and political reform in Asia in reference to a question on the impact of WWI on the world outside of Europe. From this sentence, the reader expects examples of how nationalistic feelings contributed to socio-political reform.

Ex.: *There were many causes for the rise of the "new monarchies," but they generally rose through economic turmoil from wars or from finding a common enemy to unify the country.*

This topic sentence clearly argues for the reasons why the "new monarchies" of 15<sup>th</sup> century Europe came to fruition: economic turmoil and common enemies. The student will next proceed to give evidence of economic turmoil and common enemies.

### **Focused Textual Analysis**

As you analyze a text (or texts), make sure you are offering thematic insights and building a case. Be careful to avoid merely offering your personal response to the text.

Ex.: Analysis of “The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” by T. S. Eliot

#### **Weak Analysis**

This is a weird poem. It’s about this middle aged guy who walks around town and visits some places. The poem opens with a description of the town, and then Prufrock wanders through the city, wondering “Do I dare / Disturb the universe?” Afterward, Prufrock goes to the beach and worries because “I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be,” and then after that he looks at these mermaids and worries that they won’t like him. Prufrock’s constant worrying about what other people think about him suggests that T. S. Eliot was also worried about what other people think about him. But then, the poem also changes topics or has these strange cuts a lot, so perhaps it’s reflecting the feelings of confusion people had in the Modernist era because of World War I.

#### **Strong Analysis**

“The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock” offers us a good example of Eliot’s disdain for the social changes of his era, in particular the decreasing rigidity of social class. The poem opens with striking images of the grime and pollution that define this modern society; the city’s nightlife is full of “one-night cheap hotels / And sawdust restaurants” and a “yellow smoke that slides along the street.” Prufrock, the poem’s speaker, is an everyman character who gives voice to the trivial anxieties of his era. Prufrock’s fears dominate the middle of the poem: whether to “turn back and descend the stair,” whether women will judge him for his thinning hair and unathletic build, or

whether he will seem like a bug “pinned and wriggling on the wall.” And throughout this list of anxieties, the poem repeats phrases like “Do I dare,” which is the paradox of Prufrock’s being simultaneously the least important and most self-absorbed of figures. The poem ends with Prufrock’s watching a group of mermaids: “I do not think that they will sing to me.” Eliot’s choosing a speaker so pathetic that imaginary women ignore him demonstrates to us the very low regard Eliot has for this common man, with his rolled trousers, empty head, and endless neuroses.

Ex.: Analysis of Relationships in *Captain America: Winter Soldier*, Romantic and Otherwise

Weak Analysis:

Toward the beginning of the movie, Black Widow flirts with Captain America while they are riding in a stolen truck. She clearly likes him, and she asks him, “Who do you want me to be?” His answer, “How about a friend,” is surely a big disappointment to the audience. This movie was meant to be a blockbuster, so it’s strange that it would not have any romantic relationships for Cap to keep the girls in the audience interested. He does ask out his neighbor, but later, when the movie reveals she only turned him down because she was an undercover agent assigned to protect him, Cap does not ask her again. Instead of pursuing either of the two women, Cap ends the movie at the side of Falcon—who is his wingman, literally and figuratively—as the two of them try to help the Winter Soldier, Cap’s childhood friend. In choosing Winter Soldier over Black Widow or Agent Carter, Cap puts his friendships over romance, which tells us this is a movie aimed entirely at its male audience. It’s hard to imagine many girls wanting to go see this.

### Strong Analysis

For a mainstream action movie, *Captain America: Winter Soldier* is as unusual as we could imagine. This is most obvious in the movie's central political metaphor, in which the DoD-like SHIELD is shown to have been infiltrated, from its inception, by Hydra, the movie universe's analog to Nazis. However, the movie also defies convention in its treatment of Cap's personal relationships. Black Widow, who is played by Scarlett Johansson, peppers Cap with dating suggestions for the first half of the movie. When this line culminates in her suggesting herself by asking "Who do you want me to be," Cap politely turns her down with "How about [you be] a friend." From that point, the movie's subplot about Cap's relationships focuses on his helping his childhood friend, the villainous Winter Soldier, to redeem himself.

These two plot lines, fighting fascism and helping his friend, come together in the movie's big final battle. After he has ended the threat of the fascist group Hydra, Cap chooses to put his responsibility to help his male friend over defending himself, telling Winter Soldier, "I'm with you to the end." This is a line we would expect him to say to a female romantic interest, such as Black Widow, and it symbolizes his putting helping his friend ahead of any other relationships he has. This movie takes an action character who for many years was the definition of conventional in his social and political outlook and turns all out that inside out. Cap's refusal of the usual romantic plot arc is not weird, or a refusal of women; rather, it is a symbol of the movie's refusal of the standard perspectives of its genre.

## An Effective Formula for Implementing Evidence

### EXAM TECHNIQUE: PARAGRAPH STRUCTURE

#### Point

Make your overall paragraph point – it should be something that supports your overall answer.

Detailed paragraph example:

The character is **presented at first through other characters.**

only make **one point** at a time – you can always write more paragraphs!

#### Evidence

Give your proof for your point - this should be a quotation from the text your essay is about. It should support what you're trying to say in your Point.

Bert calls him "the outcast", and "that guy" when describing him to the newcomers in Chapter X.

You can use more than one piece of evidence to support the same point.

Integrate your short quotations so that they fit into the sentence  
(there's more on quotations later on in this book)

#### Explain

Link your evidence to your point or explain the connotations or summarise the relevance of your evidence

The reader is immediately meant to think of the character as different, and not known well by the others who think of him as just "that guy".

The **connotations are explained** for each quotation, and linked back to the essay title.

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### XIII. The Revision Process

Writing is a process. Any writing assignment you undertake can be broken down into three parts: 1) Brainstorming/Drafting, 2) Review/Revision, and 3) Final Draft. Each writing assignment comes with a specific set of instructions to which you should pay

close attention. Most teachers will also give you access to the rubric they will use to grade your final product, and this rubric will tell you exactly what that teacher expects. The assignment instructions and the rubric will be instrumental in successfully completing the assignment.

### **Brainstorming and Drafting**

Before you begin writing, you need to plan your paper. If the assignment calls for you choosing your own topic, and you are having trouble choosing one, you can brainstorm to narrow it down. When you brainstorm, do not overthink or second-guess yourself. Simply make a list of every topic that leaps into your mind. You might want to set a timer to give yourself a sense of urgency.

Once you have a topic, you can use the assignment instructions and rubric to create a graphic organizer. A graphic organizer is a detailed outline that includes the points your teacher wants you to cover in the assignment and how you will address each point. You could also use an outline to plan your paper. While it may seem like more work, you will appreciate this planning tool when you begin your first draft. You will feel confident that your paper is well organized and clear before you start writing. By following your graphic organizer or outline, you can easily write the first draft of your paper.

### **Review and Revision**

The next step in the process is to review and revise your paper. Check closely for spelling errors yourself; do not rely solely on “spellcheck” to catch all errors. Make sure that each sentence is grammatically correct. An easy way to check this is to read your paper aloud. Many times your ear will catch mistakes that your eyes miss. If you find that you tend to miss mistakes when you read aloud, trying using a read aloud

option on your computer or tablet to read it for you. This type of option will read exactly what you wrote, so you will hear your paper authentically, mistakes and all, and you will be able to find mistakes that you might have missed when you read it yourself.

Another good idea is to have someone else read your paper so that person can give you feedback. Trade papers with some of the other students in your class; you can review their papers while they review yours. Remember to provide each other with constructive feedback, which includes giving directions to an author who seems to have gotten off topic, asking questions about points that are unclear, and making suggestions that will assist the author on his or her final draft. The benefit of taking on the role of editor is that you will not only see the assignment from a grader's point of view, but you will also begin to view your own work with a more critical eye. This will help you become a better self-editor and, therefore, a better writer. Once you obtain feedback from several of your peers, and perhaps from your teacher, you use these resources to create your final draft.

### **Final Draft**

The final draft stage of the writing process is typically the most relaxed because you now only need to refine your work and elaborate on the points you have made. Using the feedback you have received as a guide, all you need to do is polish your paper as guided by your peers, your teacher, and your own self-editing skills. By the end of this process, you will have created an original work that you should be very proud of, and you have become the kind of writer that will complete assignments with ease.

#### **XIV. Writing a Formal E-Mail**

In sending any kind of electronic mail for formal or professional purposes (such as correspondence with a teacher), please follow these guidelines for proper email etiquette:

Always include a specific subject line

Open with a professional greeting:

Ex.: *Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_\_,*

*Dear Ms. \_\_\_\_\_:*

*To Whom It May Concern:*

Check for correct spelling, punctuation, and capitalization before sending.

Avoid using exclamation points, emojis, slang, and acronyms (lol, rofl, omg, tl;dr).

When sending files as attachments, make sure they are clearly titled.

Send files as a PDF to ensure compatibility.

Include a salutation with your full name.

Ex.: *(Subject Line: Letter of Recommendation)*

*Dear Ms. Smith:*

*Thank you for taking the time to write me a letter of recommendation. I appreciate your time and consideration. I'm attaching the guidelines as a PDF.*

*Sincerely,*

*Peter Pettigrew*

## **XV. Laboratory Report Procedures**

### **Lab Report Format**

When writing a lab report for a science class, you will typically follow this procedure or one very similar. Always consult the specific instructions given to you by the course instructor.

*Cover page:* includes the following--

Name of Experiment

Date of Experiment

Student Name

Partner(s) name

Table Number (if applicable)

Brief statement as to the nature of the experiment

*Procedure:* A step-wise description of the actual experimental process including all the basic steps of the physical progression. A photograph of the apparatus should be included as well as a bill of materials and equipment that are utilized in the experiment.

*Hypothesis Statement:* An educated guess as to what the experimenter believes will be the results of the experiment. This is made before the experiment begins, and it will be the basis of comparison when discussing results.

*Data Sheet:* The official worksheet used during the collection of data. This includes all pertinent data and measurements.

*Graph:* A computer-generated graph of the two variables being compared in the experiment. The graph must be properly labeled. This includes the x-axis, the y-axis,

and a title. All measured quantities must include the proper units. The graph must also display the proper analysis, such as slope (regression) or area under the curve.

*Results:*

Statement of Results

Calculation of percent error against a given standard

Comparison to original hypothesis: Was the hypothesis proven correct or incorrect?

### **Discussion of Instrumental and Human Error**

Discuss a minimum of three sources of error that could have tainted the results

Relate that discussion to your percent error. State how the error would have made the results deviate above or below the given standard.

All error sources must be either instrumentation based or human specific. Do not make general comments without adequate evidence.

## **XVI. MLA Formatting**

### **Source Attribution**

When offering in-text citation for direct quotes, specific information, or data from one of your sources, you must identify the author and the page number if it is a print document.

Examples of proper in-text citation:

*According to Bowden, "The Beatles have virtually defined the parameters of pop music in the modern era" (85).*

*On page 86, Bowden goes on to describe how “the pure volume of [the Beatles’] all-time hit songs is so staggering” that many people don’t even realize that “the band wrote so many of the tunes that we all know by heart.”*

*Indeed, the ubiquity of their songs throughout film, television, and commercials might prove them to be “the most durable pop band of all time” (Bowden 89).*

### **Quote Implementation**

When directly quoting materials in your writing, make sure that the quotes are incorporated smoothly, adhering to grammatically correct syntax as well as artfully blending into the flow of your writing.

Ex.: *Water is pretty important. “Indeed, it is the building block of all life on this Earth” (Jones 4). We all need water to survive.* ☹ (Clunky, Awkward Incorporation)

*Water, the “building block of all life,” is essential to survival (Jones 4).* ☺ (Fluid)

Quotes should: supplement the writer’s own thesis, flow into a sentence, be formatted correctly, maintain the same verb tense as the rest of the sentence, and be clear in pronoun use. In high school papers, quotes should very rarely go beyond three lines. Brackets ( [ ...] ) can be used to alter nouns / pronouns or verb tenses as needed for consistent syntax.

Ex.: (Initial quote) *“The driver then darts into the car, ignoring her shouting to stop.”*

*(Applied/ Modified) As the driver attempted to flee the scene, he “dart[ed] into the car, ignoring [the police officer] shouting to stop.”*

When the source material you are quoting features quotation marks itself (i.e., it is quoting material from yet another source, or it is dialogue within a work of fictional prose), use single quote marks ( ‘...’ ) within your own standard quotation marks (“...”).

Ex.: *Given the tremendous success of the Beatles, “John Lennon’s famous line ‘We’re more popular than Jesus’ wasn’t too far from the truth” (Bowden 89).*

### **Gathering / Implementing Source Support**

The majority of research materials implemented into a source-based paper should be paraphrased; that is, the writer applies the information / insights gained from the research into the paper through his or her own words. There is certainly value in offering a select number of directly quoted phrases from the research material, but it is important for the writer to recognize what kinds of textual material make for effective “quotables” within the paper. Generally speaking, objective information—numerical data, historical or biographical dates, straightforward facts—should be implemented through summarizing and re-phrasing in the writer’s own voice. Specific lines of text that are worth quoting are typically composed of subjective insights, colorful descriptions, and striking language in their own right. Essayists quote from a source because the source said it better than they could. For example, to directly quote a simple detail like *“Thomas Jefferson spent most of his life in Virginia”* would be unnecessary and make the paper feel clunky. The essay will be more effective, and assertive, if the writer applied this information in her own words (and indeed, a writer should always be sure that his voice is the dominant force). Quoting a more colorful and nuanced line like *“Jefferson’s southern roots made him keenly aware of the contradictions within his own calls for the equality of man”*

makes more sense, stylistically, as this “quotable,” applied appropriately within the writer’s flow of ideas, provides some verve to the essay.

### **Implementing Quotes and Paraphrasing, an Extended Example**

Source: [www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com), “Kendrick Lamar,” written by Andy Kellman

Collect your information: find engaging and useful material for your paper, some that may eventually be paraphrased, and others that would be effective in the form of direct quotation.

Objective / Concrete details: this material would be more likely summarized or paraphrased within your paper

*Lamar started rapping and making mix tapes at 16, under the name “K-Dot.”*

*In 2009, he joined the “Black Hippy” collective, centered in Compton, CA, which also includes other rappers such as Ab-Soul, J-Rock, and ScHoolboy Q.*

*“Good Kid, M.A.A.D. City” (2012) debuted at #2 on the Billboard chart and featured three singles on the R+B / Hip-Hop Top 10.*

Colorful / Expressive Insight: these details are more descriptive or subjective and may serve your paper well in the form of direct quotation

*“During a 2011 concert, Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, and The Game dubbed him ‘The New King of the West Coast.’”*

*“[Good Kid] showcased Lamar as an exceptional storyteller capable of making compelling concept albums.”*

In your paper, you will then synthesize (fuse together) both paraphrased and quoted material for a smooth and impactful application of research:

*Kendrick Lamar, who burst on the scene in the late 2000's, has fast become an iconic figure in not just rap circles, but in pop music as well. Already producing noteworthy material as a 16-year-old, he initially released mix tapes under the name K-Dot. Lamar quickly earned the esteem of his Compton / gangsta rap predecessors, as the likes of Dr. Dre and Snoop Dog even labeled him "The New King of the West Coast." Lamar's pop-star status is most evident in his 2012 album charting #2 on the Billboard rankings. Beyond his commercial success, however, he has also become a critical darling, as he is often credited as being "an exceptional storyteller capable of making compelling concept albums."*

Within this illustration, note the use of specific and concrete information, woven in through the writer's natural flow of language, as well as limited but impactful, colorful "quotable" material.

### **The Works Cited page**

"Works Cited" or "Bibliography" is centered on the first line. Note that with MLA, a "Works Cited" page is a list of works you have cited; a bibliography is a list of related works on a given subject. The two terms are not interchangeable. It's highly likely that you want to use "works cited" and not "bibliography" as a high school student.

Each source should include: Author, Title of Source, Title of Container, Other contributors, Version, Number, Publisher, Publication date, and Location.

For digital texts, "Location" refers to URL (web address); for print anthologies and collected works (e.g., a literature textbook), "Location" refers to page numbers.

As of the latest edition of MLA, offering the URL of a digital source at the end of its citation is recommended, but optional. Check with your teacher to see what his or her preference is, and if you do provide a URL, make sure the web link is functional and up-to-date.

Full Dates (for daily or weekly media) are listed by day, then month, then year, e.g., *02 Dec 2016*.

You may leave out whatever is not featured or is not relevant (Ex.: “Container” or “Location” of page numbers if it is a novel, “Container” if it is a standalone website, “Version” / “Number” if it is a First Edition, etc.).

Sources are listed alphabetically by author.

Use a hanging indent (an extra tab over) for entries that go beyond one line.

Do not put extra lines between sources.

“Easybib,” etc., can be helpful, at times, but you need to learn these rules yourself rather than rely on a program.

### **Example Works Cited page**

#### Works Cited

Greenblatt, Stephen (Ed). "John Milton." *The Northern Anthology of English Literature, Eighth Edition*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. W.W. Norton and Company, 2006, pp. 693-696.

Milton, John. "Paradise Lost." *The Northern Anthology of English Literature, Eighth Edition*. Ed. Stephen Greenblatt. W.W. Norton and Company, 2006, pp. 725-852.

Shakespeare, William. *The Tragedy of Othello: The Moor of Venice*. Ed. Tucker Brooke and Lawrence Mason. Yale UP, 1947.

Steinbeck, John. *The Acts of King Arthur and His Noble Knights*. Viking Press, 1982.

Unsworth, Emma Jane. "Readers love a good anti-hero – so why do they shun anti-heroines?". *The Guardian*. 17 November 2004.

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2014/nov/17/readers-anti-hero-anti-heroines-fiction>

## **XVII. APA Formatting**

APA (American Psychological Association) is the common format for most science or social sciences courses.

APA Style in-text citations include the author, date, and page numbers (for print texts), either both inside parentheses or with the author names in running text and the date in parentheses.

Ex.: *After the intervention, children increased in the number of books read per week (Smith & Wexwood, 2010, p. 222).*

*As Smith and Wexwood point out, the intervention inspired children to read more books per week (2010, p. 222).*

Note that parenthetical citation of two authors uses "&", whereas listing the authors outside of the parenthesis uses the conventional "and."

"Reference List": Rather than titling your list of sources as "Works Cited," the APA source list is called the "Reference List."

The “Reference List” format for print sources is quite similar to MLA, with the exception that the publication date comes right after the author, in parentheses.

Ex.: Gordin, M. D. (2012). *The pseudoscience wars: Immanuel Velikovsky and the birth of the modern fringe*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

The “Reference List” format for websites is as follows: *Author, A. (date). Title of document [Format description]. Retrieved from <http://URL>.*

Ex.: Shafron, G. R., & Karno, M. P. (2013). *Heavy metal music and emotional dysphoria among listeners*. [Psychology of Popular Media Culture]. Retrieved from <http://psycnet.apa.org/psycinfo/2013-35730-001/>

### **XVIII. Chicago Formatting**

Chicago Manual of Style (CMS) formatting is the common format used by humanities courses such as history, literature, and the arts.

While CMS in-text citations can be parenthetical with the author and date format, similar to MLA, footnotes are used more frequently. Acknowledgement of a footnote begins with a superscript immediately following the end quotation mark. Numbers should begin with “1” and follow consecutively. Microsoft Word facilitates this process; look for the “References” tab and then “Insert Footnote,” which allows proper formatting of the footnotes at the bottom of each page. Notes and citations should be single spaced with a space between entries.

In general, the first time a source is cited, the footnote contains all bibliographic information. Each subsequent note is abbreviated to include the author’s last name, main title, and page numbers.

Ex.: 1. Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (London: Picador, 2012), 57-59.

A later reference to the same text would be:

4. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, 83.

If the same source is referred to again immediately following the previous note, it is noted as “Ibid.”, and this is used continuously until a new citation is provided.

Ex.: 5. Ibid., 86.

For electronic sources, include either the DOI (preferred) or the URL. The DOI is a digital object identifier, which uniquely identifies digital objects. Provide an access date only if publication dates are unavailable or the source is time sensitive. If page numbers are unavailable, include a section title or chapter when possible.

For websites, begin with the author, if known. Otherwise begin with the title of the article or web page.

Ex.: 7. “Women in WWII at a Glance”, *The National WWII Museum*, accessed July 21, 2016, <http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/ww2-history/at-a-glance/women-in-ww2.html>.

Footnotes also offer the opportunity to provide extended explanations that might not fit well in the body of the paper.

Ex.: 6. Ibid., 86. *Newly appointed UK Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has a history of politically questionable statements, including his support for English colonizing of Africa, referring to Africans with racist descriptions, referring to Hillary Clinton with misogynistic and dehumanizing language, and citing Obama’s supposed inherent sympathy for anti-British perspectives.*

The list of sources appearing at the end of the paper should be titled “Bibliography” and listed alphabetically by last name. The first line is not indented, but subsequent lines of the citation are indented. Page numbers are only provided if the citation is an article or chapter in a book. Notice that periods are used. The following examples refer to the footnote examples above.

Friedman, Thomas L. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization*. London: Picador, 2012.

“Women in WWII at a Glance”, *The National WWII Museum*. Accessed July 21, 2016.

<http://www.nationalww2museum.org/learn/education/for-students/ww2-history/at-a-glance/women-in-ww2.html>

### **Key Differences between Footnotes and Bibliography**

The author’s first and last name are not reversed in the footnote, but they are reversed in the bibliographical entry.

In the footnote, elements of the citation are separated by commas rather than periods; however, periods are used in the bibliographical entry.

The first line of a footnote is indented while subsequent lines are not; however, in the bibliographical entry the first line is not indented while subsequent lines are indented.