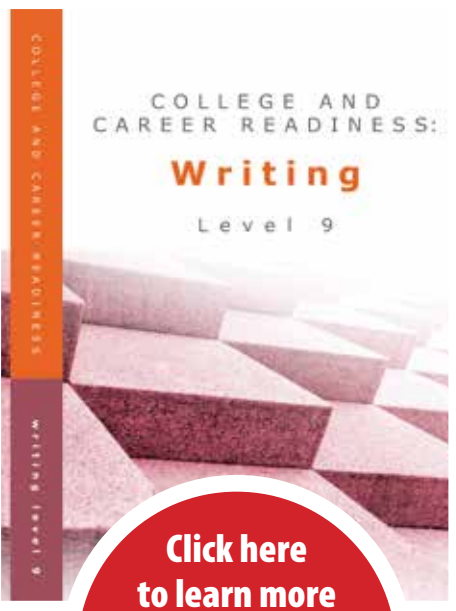




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COLLEGE AND  
CAREER READINESS:

# Writing

Level 9

**Common Core State Standards Edition**

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# STANDARDS-BASED SCORING RUBRIC FOR GRADE 9

TOPIC		
5	<b>Topic is clear and sufficiently narrow</b> for the nature of the writing.	Topic is <b>suitable to fulfilling the purpose</b> of the writing (e.g., persuasive versus informational).
4	<b>Topic is clear and sufficiently narrow</b> for the nature of the writing.	Topic is <b>suitable to fulfilling the purpose</b> of the writing (e.g., persuasive versus informational).
3	<b>Topic is clear</b> and reveals a <b>strong attempt to narrow</b> it sufficiently for the nature of the writing.	Topic may be <b>too simple or general</b> for the <b>purpose</b> of the writing (e.g., persuasive versus informational).
2	<b>Topic is clear but either too broad or too narrow</b> for the nature of the writing.	Topic may be <b>too simple or general</b> for the <b>purpose</b> of the writing (e.g., persuasive versus informational).
1	<b>Topic is clear but either too broad or too narrow</b> for the nature of the writing.	Topic may be <b>too simple or general</b> for the <b>purpose</b> of the writing (e.g., persuasive versus informational).

<b>CRAFTSMANSHIP</b>		
5	<p><b>Writing is competent. Tone and style are appropriate</b> to the topic, purpose, and audience of the piece.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All claims</b> or points being explored are <b>expressed clearly</b>.</li> <li>• The <b>distinctions</b> between the student's ideas and those from other sources are <b>carefully drawn</b>.</li> <li>• <b>All claims</b> (both the student's and others') are <b>presented accurately</b>, with <b>evidence</b> of an <b>attempt</b> to present <b>others' claims fairly</b>.</li> <li>• If appropriate to the topic, audience, and purpose, <b>narrative techniques are used purposefully</b>.</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Writing is competent. Tone and style are appropriate</b> to the topic, purpose, and audience of the piece.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>All claims</b> or points being explored are <b>expressed clearly</b>.</li> <li>• <b>Distinctions</b> between the student's ideas and those from other sources are <b>drawn</b>.</li> <li>• <b>All claims</b> (both the student's and others') are <b>presented accurately</b>, with <b>strong evidence</b> of an <b>attempt</b> to present <b>others' claims fairly</b>.</li> <li>• If appropriate to the topic, audience, and purpose, <b>narrative techniques are used purposefully</b>.</li> </ul>

<b>CRAFTSMANSHIP (CONT.)</b>		
1	<b>Writing is flawed. Tone and style are inconsistent or apparently unrelated to the topic, purpose, and audience.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Some claims</b> or points being explored are <b>specified</b>, but <b>many are implied</b> or are <b>stated ambiguously</b>.</li><li>• There is <b>minimal to no clear distinction</b> between the student's ideas and those from other sources.</li><li>• The writing suggests <b>minimal to no attempt to present both the student's and others' claims</b>.</li><li>• <b>Obvious omissions</b> in either strengths or limitations <b>suggest bias</b> and/or <b>faulty reasoning</b>.</li><li>• There is no attempt to use <b>narrative devices</b> that might be appropriate to the topic, audience, and purpose.</li></ul>





---

# PART I :

---

## **Personal Writing**

*[conveying what students have experienced,  
imagined, thought, and felt]*

You might be tempted to dismiss personal writing as less important than the other types of writing you do in school. After all, personal writing calls to mind private forms like diaries and journals. Even blogs, which tend to be written for a public audience, don't seem to call for the same level of planning and revision as a formal essay for school does.

Still, you're not likely to make it through high school without having to write about yourself for readers who want a way to get to know you. Most college applications, many scholarship applications, and even some job applications require you to submit a "personal statement."

You'll want this personal statement to be as polished as you can make it.

Don't think that, since you're still a couple of years away from applying to colleges or for scholarships, you don't need to worry about it yet. What better time to begin than when you're not under pressure to get it done? Even if the specific topic changes, the practice you do now can only help you write a more powerful personal statement when you need to.

The Common Application is accepted by over five hundred colleges and universities in the United States. Like most college applications, it includes a personal statement. In the past, topics have included "important lessons learned," "goals achieved," and "overcoming a failure or personal challenge."

The two assignments in this section are modeled after the types of topics assigned on applications like the Common Application.

---

# ASSIGNMENT 1 :

---

## Describe a Significant Experience

One of the most common college and scholarship application essays is the “significant experience” topic. It also sometimes comes up in an interview. The people assigning this topic want to know something about you as a person, something that they cannot learn from the other parts of your application. They want to hear your voice, to know your thoughts and feelings, and see who you are in addition to your grades, test scores, and activities.

If you want your essay to be noticed from the start, choose a pivotal event that might seem so insignificant on the surface that no one else would ever think of writing about it. Consider this: We learn more about Superman’s character from the small good deeds he does in his various films and television shows than we do from his mammoth save-the-world adventures.

Here are two typical writing prompts of the *significant experience* genre:

---

*Think about a time when you **faced a challenge**. Write a story describing how you met the challenge and what its outcome was.*

*Think about an **event in your life that taught you an important lesson**. Write a narrative in which you describe the event and explain the lesson you learned.*

---

Many prompts will explicitly warn you to “be sure to include specific details so that a reader can follow your story.” Even if this warning is not stated, however, one of the most important elements of a successful essay will be the details that re-create the experience for the reader.

Variations on the “significant experience” topic include:

- the **Light Bulb Moment**:

*Think of a time when you realized or suddenly understood an idea, a skill, or a concept you had been struggling with...*

- the **Childhood Event**:

*Choose a vivid memory from your childhood...*



- the **Goal Achieved:**

*Think of a time when you achieved a personal goal...*

“Nevaeh” attends an academic magnet high school in a big city. Both of her parents are physicians, but she wants to be an artist. While they want their daughter to pursue her own dream, Nevaeh’s parents encourage her to push herself academically.

Here is a re-creation of the process Nevaeh followed when assigned a typical “Describe a significant experience” prompt as a beginning-of-the-year assignment in her freshman year.

---

### **STEP 1: Select a Topic**

---

Notice that she brainstorms ideas for several possible approaches to the essay. She knows that the key is to generate more information than she will need since it will be much easier later on to eliminate unnecessary material than to be facing a deadline and still thinking of what to say.

Notice also that, in this early step, she does not pause to evaluate or expand on each idea. As it occurs to her, she jots it down.

*light bulb moment:*

- Algebra 1—what X represents...the missing piece of the puzzle, the thing you don't know
- all the different colors and shades you can make just by mixing red, yellow, and blue in different quantities?

*childhood event: choose a vivid memory from your childhood...*

- first time on a public bus by myself
- first art show with Mrs. Snidely [my private art teacher]

*goal achieved:*

- three paintings for that first art show
- getting accepted to my high school

## STEP 2: Develop a Slant/Angle/Hook

This is the step when Nevaeh can begin to evaluate her topic ideas and decide which ones are more likely to yield good topics than others might.

### WHAT CAN MY ANGLE BE?

- Algebra 1—what X represents...the missing piece of the puzzle, the thing you don't know  
I'm an artist, not a math geek  
My parents are both scientists, and they could not understand what I wasn't getting
- all the different colors and shades you can make just by mixing red, yellow, and blue in different quantities?  
never had to be "frugal," so it just made sense to buy a tube of any color I'd need
- first time on a public bus by myself  
this one is dull. Everyone has a "first time" experience, so big deal
- first art show with Mrs. Snidely—three paintings for that first art show  
I think it's more interesting if I combine the two. If you're going to paint, you're going to have shows, so that's no big deal. But the rush to get enough pieces done to make the show worth it, that's kind of cool to talk about.

Nevaeh is very wisely evaluating her topic ideas in terms of what will be more interesting to her reader. As all of the experts warn, they read so many essays on such similar topics that you want to do everything in your power to make yours different.

### WHERE WOULD I BEGIN MY DESCRIPTION AND EXPLANATION?

- Algebra 1—I'd probably start with the first test I failed. Maybe the note Mr. Libbey sent home.
- mixing colors—maybe when Mrs. Snidely asked how heavy I wanted my paint box to be
- maybe going home to tell mom and dad that there was science in painting!

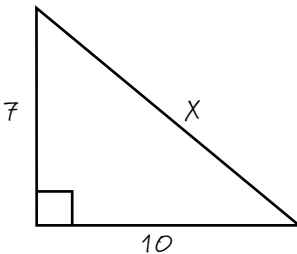
## STEP 5: First Draft

I'd failed my first test ever! It was last year in math class. Algebra 1. I almost passed. I got more than two-thirds of the questions right, but there five word problems, and each one counted double the equations. I got all of the equations right and none of the word problems. Because they counted double, I failed with a 50%. My teacher even sent a letter home to my parents.

"Dear Mr. and Mrs. Knox, Nevaeh seems to have a poor foundation in basic arithmetical functions and might not be appropriately placed in this honors Algebra 1 course..."

I thought this was a mean thing to say because, as I said, I got all of the equations right. Obviously, I knew my arithmetic. I knew MDAS and to simplify the equation and clear all parentheses. I knew my addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division tables. So I did not have a "poor foundation in basic arithmetical functions."

The problem was that in equations, they give you the variable. They always give you something that looks like this: " $3(16x - y) = 39$ " or " $5(4 + 15x) = 5y - 60$ ," and they tell you to "solve for  $x$  and  $y$ ." Sometimes they give you a picture like this:



and they tell you to "solve for  $x$ ."

Nevaeh starts out fairly strongly. She places the reader firmly in the middle of the situation. However, this beginning and the paragraphs that immediately follow make it seem as if Nevaeh's "experience" is failing the test.

This reference to an unidentified "they" and "you" will be a persistent error in Nevaeh's draft.

Here is Nevaeh's revised draft.

Generally, this is a stronger beginning. It clearly establishes that the experience Nevaeh is going to discuss has to do with a realization about algebra. She does, however, introduce a new topic that has not appeared in any of her preliminaries—the “when am I going to use this?” issue. By mentioning it in her introduction, she is telling her reader that this is a topic she will explore in greater depth later. She should also work on finding a way to introduce her topic without borrowing the actual wording of the assignment (“light bulb moment”).

Separating it from the rest of the text is a perfectly acceptable way to present a quotation—especially a quotation longer than a single line of text—but the left-hand margin should be justified to be wider than the indented line of a new paragraph, and the quotation should not be set off with quotation marks. This is something she will want to fix before turning in her final draft.

“Crack” is too colloquial—almost slang, and Nevaeh still has a tendency to repeat herself.

It was while making biscuits for my father's birthday dinner that I figured out something I could not understand in Algebra 1. Not only did that light bulb moment save my grade in algebra and my standing as an honor student, it showed me never to ask my teachers “when am I ever going to use this?” It was the middle of October, and I'd just failed my first test ever! It was frustrating because I got more than two-thirds of the questions right. But there were five word problems, and each one counted double the equations.

I got all of the equations right but none of the word problems.

Because the word problems counted double, I failed the test with a 50%. My teacher even sent a letter home to my parents:

“Dear Mr. and Mrs. Knox, Nevaeh seems to have a poor foundation in basic arithmetical functions and might not be appropriately placed in this honors Algebra 1 course...”

I didn't think the crack about “basic arithmetical functions” was fair because I got all of the equations right. Obviously, I knew my arithmetic. I knew MDAS and to simplify the equation and clear all parentheses. I knew my addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division tables. So I did not have a “poor foundation in basic arithmetical functions.”

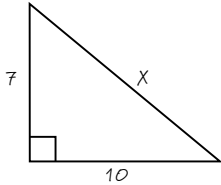
The reason I was failing algebra wasn't because of arithmetic. It was deeper. Equations always tell the variable outright. They always look something like this:

$$"3(16x - 4) = 39"$$

or

$$"5(4 + 15x) = 54 - 60."$$

The instructions say to "solve for  $x$  and  $y$ ." Sometimes the problem includes a picture like this:



and the instructions say to "solve for  $x$ ."

Now word problems are a completely different thing. Word problems all sound like this:

"There is a triangular piece of ground that Gordon wants to fence in for a dog run. One side is twice the length of the shortest side, and the third side is one-third longer than the shortest side. If the longest side of the triangle runs directly next to the house, how much fencing will Gordon need to buy?"

First of all, how does Gordon know that the one side is twice the other side if he doesn't already know the measurement of the two sides? Secondly, if he really wants to know the perimeter of the triangle, why doesn't he just get a tape measure and measure it? And finally, it's a trick question because Gordon doesn't need to put up a fence directly next to his house, only on the other two sides.

So the whole problem is ridiculous.

• • •

Aside from a minor punctuation error (quotations set off from the body of the text, as Nevaeh's two equations are, do not need to be put in quotation marks), Nevaeh has successfully clarified the presentation of this section.

Nevaeh needs to format this long quotation the same way as the letter to her parents, left margin flush and indented more than the first line of a paragraph.

Ordinarily, we'd advise Nevaeh to break the habit of making her point with a string of rhetorical questions, but here they do contribute to the emphatic tone she said she wanted to create. However, she does want to be careful not to sound as if she's having a temper tantrum.




---

# MINI-LESSON 1:

---

## Journal Writing

### Journal as Free-writing Exercise

“Donovan” is a ninth-grader in a private boys’ boarding school. Because of his parents’ careers, he moved and changed schools four times in the past three years. He hopes to spend his entire high school career where he is and then attend either Harvard or Princeton. At this point, he has not set a career goal for himself, but he has always enjoyed and done well in science.

---

*For better or worse, the Internet is continuously expanding, having an ever-increasing impact on virtually every aspect of modern life. Proponents argue that the speed with which information can be shared around the world has allowed for enormous gains in knowledge that otherwise might have taken years or longer to develop. However, some critics claim that the same ability to share information contributes to worldwide crime, corruption, and immorality. They insist there needs to be a governing board to decide what would constitute appropriate content for and uses of the Internet. If we accept that the Internet has potential for both great good and great harm, how would you respond to those who call for an Internet governing body? Be certain to support your position and all of your assertions with specific references to your own knowledge and experience.*

---

Donovan’s teacher assures the class that this is not a formal essay, nor is it a timed exam-type essay. Rather, this is an opportunity for each student to take stock of his own opinion and his reasons for that opinion.

**Here is Donovan’s entry, which he wrote in the first ten minutes of class time.**

One of the coolest things about the Internet is that there is no police force to tell you what you can and can’t post or what you can and can’t look at. Most domains (I’m not sure what they’re called) have their own policies and methods of enforcing them. If they are a paid-membership site, they have ways to keep non-paying people from getting in. If they are an “adult” site, they usually have ways to keep kids out.

Because this is a journal entry and not a formal essay, Donovan’s use of slang and second-person narration is fine. If this exercise were to be expanded into a full writing assignment, this introductory sentence would need to be revised.





WHAT TYPE OR TONE OF VOICE DO I WANT TO CREATE IN MY READER'S MIND? I want to sound cheerful. Like someone telling a joke. But maybe if I pick the concert story, I should sound more thoughtful... "I did wrong, and I learned a lesson." But it is supposed to be an "amusing" story, so I think I should try for an amusing tone.

---

### **STEP 3: Brainstorm, Discuss, Research**

---

Never dismiss the importance of research, even if all it entails is looking through a photo album or asking your parents or siblings to fill in some details you don't quite remember. Wandering the Internet or flipping through a few print magazines can do a lot to jog your memory and spur your creative thinking to give you the types of specific detail you will need for a successful essay.

And also remember that a brainstorming step is when you generate ideas and jot them down, not when you evaluate, explain, or prioritize them. Your goal at this point is to gather more material than you can possibly use.

Concert:

Song was "Finale" from the Lone Ranger movie (Johnny Depp)... actually it's based on a real song, the William Tell Overture...

This part of the song was used in old Lone Ranger radio and television shows.

Trumpets begin the whole thing.

Song was supposed to begin the whole concert.

I did not hear the announcement that it was moved to the last song...the Finale

Night of the concert...

Mr. Dunbarry came out to begin the concert, and I was right on it.

Good Details:

Mr. Dunbarry always stood up on his toes

raised his arms to begin.

raised the baton

I also learned that you shouldn't be egotistical just because you're good at something. Something will happen to bring you down a few pegs.

Rachel is rushing through this section, trying to cover too much in too little time and space. She doesn't need to mention every lesson she learned; it would be better for her to choose the most important and discuss that one fully.

### **Analysis of First Draft**

**What is the writer's point?** The writer's point is that an embarrassing moment can lead to an important lesson.

**What is her angle?** Her angle is difficult to determine. The prompt asks for a "humorous or entertaining" event and a discussion of why the event is "memorable." The writer mentions being embarrassed and refers to part of the experience as "funny," but she does not explore these aspects. Instead, she narrates and describes rather than re-creating the experience for her reader.

**What type or tone of voice has she created in her reader's mind?** The writer has said she wants to convey an amused tone, like telling a joke, but she does not achieve this. At best, the tone is mildly informal and conversational.

**What techniques has the writer used to create this voice?** The conversational tone is suggested by a few asides like "I guess," and some direct address to the reader.

**What specific details, facts, etc., make this experience real?** This is the essay's greatest area of undeveloped potential. There are too few details, and those that are here are mentioned too briefly. For the most part, the writer "tells" rather than "shows," and as a result, the readers do not receive as vivid an impression of the event as we might.

**NOW plan your own essay to the same, or a similar, prompt. Remember that Rachel brainstormed and took notes on several possible topics and developed each of them to see which one would yield the best essay.**

---

**STEP 1: Select a Topic**

---

What experiences lend themselves to a successful evaluation?

What point would you want to make in evaluating each of these potential topics?

---

**STEP 2: Develop a Slant/Angle/Hook**

---

What will your angle be?

Where might you begin your evaluation?

What type or tone of voice do you want to create in your reader's mind?

---

**STEP 3: Brainstorm, Discuss, Research**

---

What specific details, facts, etc., will make this experience real and not merely hypothetical?

How can you re-create the experience for your reader, rather than simply tell about it?

---

**STEP 4: Outline**

---

---

**STEP 5: First Draft**

---

---

**STEP 6: Peer Edit**

---

You and your partner might find it helpful to use the same questions Rachel and her partner used:

**What is the writer's point?**

**What is the writer's angle?**

**What type or tone of voice has the writer created in the reader's mind?**

**What specific details, facts, etc., make this experience real?**



---

### **STEP 7: Revised/Final Draft**

---

Here are Rachel's editor's comments and analysis, as well as Rachel's responses:

- Rachel is making several errors in style and tone in this paragraph. The biggest mistake is her use of second-person narration—directly addressing her reader. There are very few occasions when second-person is necessary, and it generally serves to distance the reader from the action or from sympathy with the writer.
- Phrases like “last year” are relative and virtually meaningless. A reader who does not know that Rachel is writing this in the ninth grade cannot appreciate the fact that the experience took place when she was an eighth grader.
- Rachel does a sufficient job identifying the song. The comment that the reader would recognize it does not add anything to her re-creating the experience or the reader's appreciation of it.
- Since Rachel has chosen to delay telling the “punch line,” she should do more here to delay it even further. A detailed step-by-step account of the mistake would create suspense and make the payoff even more rewarding for the reader.
- One of the surest ways to lessen a reader's emotional response is to tell the reader what that response is supposed to be.
- Now, Rachel is slipping into a “telling” rather than a “showing” mode.
- Again, Rachel is missing the opportunity to provide a few details, to show rather than tell, and draw all of the potential from this narrative.
- Rachel should make it a point to tell us how well this performance went. Did she play her introduction as well as at the beginning of the concert?
- While she has shown this to be an embarrassing experience, certainly a very public mistake, Rachel has not given the reader any basis to appreciate this experience as “humiliating.”

- Nice play on words.
- Rachel is rushing through this section, trying to cover too much in too little time and space. She doesn't need to mention every lesson she learned; it would be better for her to choose the most important and discuss that one fully.

**And here is Rachel's reaction:**

So, I need more details...I know this should read like a story not just something I remember, so the stuff about Mr. Dunbarr on his toes and all, and the baton—I need to include those.

I also need to pick one lesson and focus on that. I didn't really learn anything about paying attention or teamwork. But it was cool the way we just went on with the concert and finished really strong. I think that will be my focus.

### **Analysis of First Draft**

**What is the writer's point?** The writer's point is that an embarrassing moment can lead to an important lesson.

That is how I started out, but now I want to show that even a horrible mistake can come out all right.

**What is her angle?** Her angle is difficult to determine. The prompt asks for a "humorous or entertaining" event and a discussion of why the event is "memorable." The writer mentions being embarrassed and refers to part of the experience as "funny," but she does not explore these aspects. Instead, she narrates and describes rather than re-creating the experience for her reader.

It's supposed to be "humorous or amusing," so I need to play that up more. I didn't laugh at the time, but I do laugh about it now. No one in the audience laughed, but it is funny when you think about me playing that song all alone while everyone else is playing something else.

**What techniques has the writer used to create this voice?**

**What specific details, facts, etc., make this profile informative and powerful?**

An important part of the peer review step in this series of books is the author's response to the editor's comments. Peer review or editing is not simply a step added to the writing process to take up time and fill a classroom period. Even if there are no formal peer-review activities, the writer who does not ask at least one other person to read and comment on the first draft of his or her work is foolish. At the very least, the editor provides another pair of eyes, someone who can look at the work objectively and find sections that might be underdeveloped, overdeveloped, irrelevant, or missing. An objective editor can find errors in grammar, mechanics, and other conventions that you might have missed.

---

### **STEP 7: Revised/Final Draft**

---

**Here are Donovan's editor's comments and analysis, as well as Donovan's responses:**

- Donovan's intent is clear, but this introduction starts his profile out poorly. First, Donovan—like many ninth-graders—must break the habit of directly addressing his reader. The use of second-person narration shifts the focus from the topic and gives too much attention to the writer and the reader. Second, Donovan spends entirely too much time—especially at the very start of his essay—describing the stereotypical woman scientist. Four sentences in, and Donovan has not even introduced his topic yet. His word choice is also immature and repetitive
- While “most people” have most likely heard of Marie Curie, they probably do not know exactly who she was or what she did. As was the case in his introduction, Donovan's point is clear, but he is relying too heavily on invalid claims to introduce that point.
- Decent information, but Donovan uses the words “Poland” or “Polish” eight times. He uses “Polish heritage” three times. He seems to have lost control of his sentence structure as well.
- The manner of Pierre's death is probably not relevant here. And Donovan makes it sound almost as if Pierre intentionally “had his skull crushed.”

---

# ASSIGNMENT 2:

---

## Book Report—Fiction

A book report is an informative piece that discusses a book from a purely objective perspective. The main purpose of a book *report* (as opposed to a book *review*) is to give an account of the thesis, theme, or main idea of the work and explain how those elements are developed.

Sometimes, there is a subjective or personal element to a book report, and you are asked to examine and explain your reaction to the reading. You may be invited to state whether you agree or disagree with the book's main idea or generally like or dislike how that main idea is developed. Still, a book *report* cannot be purely subjective, and it is always important that the report demonstrate that you *understand* the reading and can explain the basis of your reaction.

Before he started at his new high school, **Donovan** was given a summer reading list and several writing assignments. One of the assignments was to choose a book-length work from the list and write a formal report like one that might be presented to a school board considering adding the book to its ninth-grade curriculum. The assignment was explicit that the report was *not* to include a recommendation either way but should address possible reasons for both inclusion and exclusion.

Donovan chose Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* because he knew Bradbury was a famous science fiction author.

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### STEP 1: Select a Topic

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**Title:** *Fahrenheit 451*

**Author:** Ray Bradbury

**Publication information (MLA format):** New York: Simon and Schuster, 2012. (Reissue edition)

**Genre:** fiction (novel, science fiction, dystopian literature)

**Medium or format on which you are reporting:** e-Book

- Guy Montag meets Clarisse and begins to feel curious.

• **introduction of conflict—**

- Guy Montag calls in sick for work.
- He stole a book out of the woman's house the night before (character-v-society).
- Earlier, when Clarisse asks Montag if he is happy, THAT introduces the character-v-self conflict.

• **complications and obstacles—**

- His wife, Mildred, and her friends are annoying and totally into their society and stupid television shows.
- The chief, Beatty, knows Guy Montag is up to something.
- Montag can't understand the books he is reading.

• **rising action—**

- Clarisse asks Montag if he is happy.
- They do a fire where a woman kills herself. (The suicide is a big deal for Montag.)
- Guy Montag hides a book under his pillow.
- Beatty comes to Montag's house. He knows something is up.
- He shows Mildred a whole stockpile of books he has hidden!
- They are called to burn down Guy Montag's house.

\* \* \*

Donovan's notes continue. He is generally focusing too much on plot summary rather than identifying events that really constitute the intensification of the plot and the rise toward a climax.





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# ASSIGNMENT 4 :

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## Literary Analysis—Fiction

The main difference between a work of analysis and a report is that, while the report provides a purely surface look at the literature, an analysis examines each part or element of the literature and provides an understanding of how the literature “works,” how it achieves its purpose. If a story is funny, an analysis will explain how it is funny. If it is suspenseful, an analysis will explain how the author created the suspense. An analysis might go even further and explain how the story’s humor and suspense work together to make the story as popular as it is.

Below are a report and an analysis of a slice of cherry pie.

### Report on a Cherry Pie:

The crust was golden brown and shone with a glossy sheen.

The cherries were bright red, soft, and tart.

The syrupy juice in the pie was sweet but had a tang like citrus.

The pie was a delicious contrast of sweet and tart and tangy.

### Analysis of a Cherry Pie:

*Before being baked, the top crust was brushed with beaten egg whites to help the crust to brown and create a soft, satiny sheen while baking.*

*The color, texture, and flavor of the cherries suggest that they were not quite ripe. Fully ripe cherries tend not only to be too sweet but are also softer and fall apart in baking. Tart, firm cherries will provide better flavor and texture to the finished pie.*

*The syrup needs sugar as a thickening agent, so the syrup provides most of the pie’s sweetness.*

*A small measure—a teaspoon or less—of lemon juice was added to the syrup. The acid in the lemon juice both preserves the color of the cherries and adds a tangy zest that people will notice, but not be able to identify.*

*The contrast of sweet and tart and tangy yields a pie that will be utterly delicious.*

- He uses important transition cues to show that he is moving on to another point from the original "Unity" letter:

→ "You deplore the demonstrations..."

→ "One of the basic points in your statement is..."

And how does Dr. King give his letter unity?

- One important relationship (a unifying theme) throughout the whole letter is that "A Call for Unity" was written by clergymen, and King was also a preacher, so he writes to them as colleagues.

→ He begins: "My Dear Fellow Clergymen."

→ One really important point is when he is talking about how disappointed he is that the church and the clergy have not supported the just cause but have actually tried to perpetuate discrimination: "I say this as a minister of the gospel, who loves the church; who was nurtured in its bosom; who has been sustained by its spiritual blessings and who will remain true to it as long as the cord of life shall lengthen."

→ In the last paragraph, he says he would like to meet them "as a fellow clergyman and a Christian brother."

- Another important unifying theme is that he uses a lot of allusions to the Bible. I think this is probably because he is a preacher, and he knows he is writing to preachers. Also probably because he wants to show that his cause and his side of the issue is the right one from a biblical standpoint.

→ He compares himself to an Old Testament prophet and to the Apostle Paul:

— "Just as the prophets of the eighth century B.C..."

— "just as the Apostle Paul left his village of Tarsus...so am I..."

Nevaeh is doing an excellent job jotting down her ideas and collecting examples and evidence from the letter. It is a common error to think that you will find your material while you are writing the first draft. The truth is that this is the step when you think of most of your ideas and find most of your information. Writing the first draft is when you worry about putting everything into a readable and understandable form.

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## PART III:

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### Persuasive Writing

[*asserting and defending claims*]

Nearly everyone likes to argue. We all, even the least spoiled among us, like to get our own way or prove that we're right. Most of us like—every once in a while—to change someone's mind or influence how he acts.

In most professional and academic situations, to argue is to use facts and logic to change the other person's mind or behavior. Think about this scene: You're in a store with your mother. You have your own money, and your mother has said that you can buy something for yourself. You decide to buy a snake you see in the store's pet department.

Your mother says you cannot have the snake.

Here is an opportunity for argument: You want to convince your mother to let you buy the snake. Your mother wants to convince you not to buy it.

**Ineffective argument** might sound like this:

*You:* Mom, may I buy this pet snake?

*Mom:* No.

*You:* Why not?

*Mom:* Because I said so.

*You:* But Mommmyyyyyyy ...

*Mom:* I...said...no!

*You:* But I waaaaannnnnnnt him!

Regardless of who ends up “winning,” this conversation is ineffective argument because it is based solely on emotion. Neither you nor your mother offers any facts or logical reasons for your position.

Here is Nevaeh's revised draft. Notice how she has included the specific data she gathered in Step 3, rather than merely asserting that it exists.

Nevaeh has chosen a fairly simplistic fix, but at least she has eliminated her inappropriate use of first-person. This sentence no longer limits her audience to fellow students.

Nevaeh still alludes to those unspecified "other costs," but she has fixed the repetitive references to salaries.

Assuming her information from the website is accurate, and she has done her arithmetic correctly, Nevaeh has done exactly what she needed to do here.

This summary statement still does not strengthen her argument, but at least in context with hard data, is has more validity than it had in Nevaeh's first draft.

The Board of Education of the West Perch City School District has suggested, in its infinite wisdom, to increase the number of days we students have to attend school by ten days and to take these ten days from our hard-earned and much-needed winter and spring vacations. This is a bad idea because increasing the number of days students go to school would be too expensive. No one will want to pay the extra money. There will be many costs involved in keeping school open for ten extra days. Teachers, custodians, and cafeteria people will all have to be paid for their ten extra days' work.. Transportation costs will increase, and there will be other costs as well.

Teachers in our district are paid for only the days they work—183. That means, if we ask them to work another ten days, we have to pay them for those ten new days. That's a lot of money. According to the Board of Education's website, we had 80,000 teachers in the 2012-2013 school year. They make anywhere from a low of \$45,000 to a maximum of \$100,000. That means the average teacher in our district makes \$72,500, or \$396 a day for 183 days. Ten additional days would cost us \$3,960 per teacher or \$316,800,000 for all 80,000 teachers! No one's going to want to pay that kind of money just to make us go to school more.

The cost of transportation—getting students to and from school—is enough of a reason by itself to ditch this plan. Also according to the Board of Education's website, in 2011, the city spent



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# MINI-LESSON 1 :

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## **The Test or Exam Essay (Support, refute, or qualify the thesis that...)**

Generally in school, a strong effort is made for all of your writing assignments to resemble the types of writing you are likely to do in college and in your career. In college, most of your writing will look like the kinds of articles and journal entries professionals in the field write and publish as part of their work. The exam essay, however, is probably the least “real” or “authentic” type of writing you’ll need to learn. The only time you will ever write an exam essay is when you are taking an exam. Since these exams will include mid-terms and finals, state or national exams, SATs, ACTs, or IB or AP exams, the exam essay is definitely a form worth mastering.

When you are asked to write an essay as part of an exam, be aware that the scorer of your essay has been trained to value the quality of the information more than the quality of essay itself, but if the question specifies an *essay*, you must assume that proper form and language are required and that poor writing will lower your score.

It will always be in your best interest to pay attention to the process you’ve learned in order to create clear, informative, and interesting essays.

**Donovan’s** social studies teacher gave his students the following prompt as a practice essay before their mid-term exam. He told the students that, if they did well enough on this in-class essay, they could use it in exchange for one of the essays they would write on the actual exam.



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# PART IV:

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## The Research Projects

Of all the writing you will do in school, the writing of your Research Report is probably the most important. The processes of gathering information and reporting your findings comprise two essential bodies of skills.

**Conducting research** requires you to

1. Identify something you need to know and to realize that you do not know it;
2. Locate the necessary information;
3. Collect a sufficient amount of information while weeding out what is too much or not helpful;
4. Study and understand the information so that you can explain it to others in order for them to understand it as well.

**Composing the research report** requires you to

1. Study the information you have gathered so that you understand it well enough to explain it to someone else;
2. Organize the information in a pattern and structure that will help others to understand and remember it;
3. Find the means (words, sentences, charts, and pictures) to communicate the information to others.

The ability to learn independently (conduct research) and communicate your knowledge to others (compose a report) are abilities central to just about every field of study in college and graduate school and every professional career. There is arguably not a single adult job that does not, from time to time, require the practitioner to learn new knowledge and skills without the benefit of a class or teacher. Many jobs also require a single member of the staff to learn new material and then report that material to the rest of the staff.

The two research projects in this book are designed to help you learn and practice these essential college and career skills.

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# ASSIGNMENT 1:

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## Research Project— Non-English Language Arts

Chances are that your high school and college years (and your years of graduate school beyond that) will see you conducting some form of research in every one of your academic courses. The process for compiling information in biology and presenting it to others is not terribly different from composing a research report in United States history or Native American oral literature.

And the process of writing a formal research paper is not terribly different from the process of writing any other academic paper you've written or will have to write.

**Mateo** is taking a semester-long elective course called *Freshman Inquiry*. At the beginning of the course, every student submitted a topic that he or she hoped to explore during the semester, and every week, one of those topics is chosen for that week's study.

The course also requires an end-of-semester research report. The topic is completely the student's choice with the only restriction being that the research report be an extension of one of that semester's weekly topics.

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### STEP 1: Select a Topic

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The teacher of *Freshman Inquiry* advises his students that a good way to begin a research project—especially for novice researchers—is to ask a series of questions. Mateo first thinks in terms of broad, open questions:

- What effects of the Civil War are still felt in the United States today?
- Why do popular fashions like clothing, architecture, and music change?
- How do scientists learn to tell the difference between myths about a "scientific phenomenon" and the truth about what happened?
- Why is some literature, like Shakespeare's plays, still popular long after the author's death while other literature is forgotten?



## STEP 6: First Draft

A lot of people like to believe that animals, like fish and birds, can predict things like storms and earthquakes, but that is just a common myth that cannot be proven to be true. In October of 2013, a couple of oarfish washed up on two California beaches, and everyone hyped it up as if “the big one” was about to happen at any time, and California was going to fall into the sea. Of course, this earthquake didn’t happen. One reason people believed that these two oarfish sightings were forecasting the destruction of life as we know it in California is because oarfish supposedly predicted the big earthquake and tsunami in Japan in 2011 and the big earthquake that hit Chile in 2010. The only problem is, the claims that oarfish predicted those earthquakes are just that—fish stories.

Southern California experienced two weird wash-ups of dead oarfish in a single week. On October 13, a diver off of Catalina Island discovered the body of an 18-foot oarfish that weighed 400 lbs. Less than a week later, on October 18, a 14-foot oarfish was found on the beach at Oceanside Harbor in San Diego County. What made these two sightings especially weird is the fact that southern California hasn’t had an oarfish wash up on a beach since 2010. Something was up.

One reason people got alarmed over the weird sightings was because the particular fish sighted, the oarfish (Latin name: *Regalecus glesne*, which means: “King of Herrings”) is believed to have the ability to predict

On the whole, this is not a bad introduction. Mateo makes his thesis clear and provides a decent overview of the points he is going to discuss in his paper. His tone is perhaps a little too glib, however. If he wants his reader to take his thesis and his research seriously, he must approach them a little more seriously.

While it wasn’t an issue in his preliminaries, the correct term for what Mateo is talking about is “beaching.” This is the term all of his sources used, and he needs to use it as well, especially in his actual report. “Weird” is also not an objective, scientific word.

Although these are specific facts and dates, they are already widely known and readily available, so Mateo does not need to cite any specific sources. He does need to watch a tendency to repeat himself (two mentions each of the oddness of the phenomenon and of the fact that both sightings occurred within one week of each other in a single paragraph), and his tone is still too flippant.

Structurally, this is a nice transition, but there are a few technical problems with it. The connection with earthquakes is not “one reason” for the concern—it was the only reason. Also, Mateo repeats the words (and sentiment) “weird sightings” for the third time in almost as many sentences.





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# MINI-LESSON 1:

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## What to Do with Outside Sources

Probably the most identifiable aspect of a research project is the use of multiple outside sources. Of course, most of the writing you will do in school and your career will require you to gather material, but the research project is the one occasion when that search for information is essentially the *purpose* of the assignment.

It's important to know *what to do* with those sources and that information—how to combine facts and ideas from a variety of sources with your own idea—and *how to give credit* to those sources.

### Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

Since the beginning of the semester, Mateo's *Freshman Inquiry* teacher has stressed how source material was to be used in all class discussions and writing assignments. He taught the students that there were three ways in which source material could be used, but the three ways were not arbitrarily interchangeable.

- A **DIRECT QUOTATION** is the use of the exact words taken directly from your source. A direct quotation is *always* identified as such, and the source is almost always cited in the body of your report. Although the effective use of a well-worded quotation can liven up a dull paper, it is better to underquote than to overquote. You certainly don't want to use quotations so frequently that you allow your sources to speak for you, and you become little more than a medium through which your sources speak.

Regardless of the documentation style you are using, direct quotations are *always* documented with a footnote, endnote, or parenthetical entry.

The key to quoting effectively from your sources is simply to *be certain you know and can explain to someone else why you are quoting the material.*

Of course, if you are analyzing the text, examining the source's word choice or sentence structure, if you are building an interpretation on a close and precise reading of the text, you must show your reader the text on which you are commenting.

a political condemnation (366). **In a New York Times article about the 2010 Broadway revival of the play, director Gregory Mosher says that,** in Miller's view, informing "is an act of self-betrayal," losing Eddie his place in the community, his self-respect and finally, his life (Taylor 58). Perhaps Miller's feelings toward Kazan had softened between 1952 and 1955. Perhaps he was now seeing his former friend and collaborator as the victim of his own nature, rather than as the hard-nosed, opportunistic and selfish turncoat that much of the left-wing theatre community believed Kazan to be. **He himself suggests this in his autobiography,** when he writes, "certainly, I felt distaste for those who groveled before this tawdry tribune of moralistic vote-snatchers, but I had as much pity as anger toward them" (329).

. . .

**Kazan would later reflect in his autobiography,** "Once brought together, Art and I got along well—even though I was somewhat tense in his company, because we'd never discussed (and never did discuss) the reasons for our 'break'" (465).

. . .

#### Works Cited

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Miller, Arthur. *Timebends*. New York: Penguin Books, 1995.

Schickel, Richard. *Elia Kazan, a biography*. New York: Harper Books, 2005.



victimizers are almost always male. This is anti-female (misogynist).

According to Lauren Hollister, there are ten clear signs of an abusive relationship. Your boyfriend has a background of abuse or abandonment. He has an uncontrolled temper and shows signs of extreme jealousy. He displays controlling behavior and sometimes even threatens you with violence if he doesn't get his way. He uses isolation as a way of controlling you (211–215).

Edward Cullen exhibits every one of those behaviors. It's almost as if Stephenie Meyer made their relationship be abusive on purpose. These conversations from a couple of the books show these traits in Edward:

We were near the parking lot now. I veered left, toward my truck. Something caught my jacket, yanking me back.

'Where do you think you're going?' he asked, outraged. He was gripping a fistful of my jacket in one hand.

I was confused. 'I'm going home.'

'Didn't you hear me promise to take you safely home? Do you think I'm going to let you drive in your condition?' His voice was still indignant.

'What condition? And what about my truck?' I complained.

'I'll have Alice drop it off after school.'  
(*Twilight* 103)

He was towing me toward his car now,

Rachel is making two significant errors here that might severely undermine her credibility with many of her readers. First is the presumption that the abuser in a relationship is, without question, the male. If Hollister's article is written specifically for young women, Rachel needs to recognize and note this. Otherwise, she needs to use gender-neutral terms like "abuser" and "abused" to describe the two roles in the relationship. Second, Rachel's use of second-person further distances all readers who do not have—and are not likely to have—a boyfriend.

Notice that Rachel introduces her source as saying there are ten signs, but then she lists only five. If she is going to specify ten, she needs to list all ten, even if she then shows Edward Cullen to exhibit only "most" of them.

This entire section is poorly presented. Rachel proves nothing by simply stringing along a number of quotations from the various novels. She must discuss each to show her reader what trait is being illustrated and how each excerpt illustrates that trait.



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# APPENDIX 1 :

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## Glossary of Literary and Rhetorical Terms

**ALLEGORY:** a work of art (literary or graphic) that uses symbols and archetypes to communicate a meaning deeper than the surface plot or literal interpretation

*“The Three Little Pigs” and “The Tortoise and the Hare” are two well-known allegories that illustrate the benefits of hard work and effort.*

**ANAPHORA:** a **RHETORICAL DEVICE** in which the writer uses the same word or phrase at the beginning of successive clauses or sentences

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with unalienable rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness.*

*He has refused his Assent to Laws*

*He has forbidden his Governors*

*He has refused to pass other Laws*

**ANTAGONIST:** in fiction, the character or force that opposes the **PROTAGONIST** and strives to prevent the **PROTAGONIST** from achieving his/her goal

*In Ray Bradbury’s Fahrenheit 451, the antagonists are society and the part of Guy Montag’s personality that accepts his role of fireman without question.*

**ANTITHESIS:** a **RHETORICAL DEVICE** in which the writer places two contrasting or contradictory ideas immediately beside one another in a sentence or paragraph

*To err is human; to forgive divine.*

—Alexander Pope, An Essay on Criticism, Part II, 1711