

**The Chantilly High School  
Student Writer's Guide:  
A Style Manual**



## **Acknowledgments**

*The Chantilly High School Student Writer's Guide: A Style Manual* was inspired in part by *The Writer's Guide: A Style Manual*, published by WS Publications in 1989 for West Springfield High School. The following Fairfax County teachers were responsible for creating the West Springfield Manual: Denice Blake, Susan Latour, Creta Payne, Wendy Pinhey, Kathryn Russell, and Polly Woodard.

# Contents

## **The Writing Process**

The Issue of Writer's Integrity .....	2
Plagiarism .....	2
When and What to Document .....	3
Prewriting .....	5
Outlining .....	5
Composing .....	6
Writing the Introduction .....	7
A Complete Introduction .....	8
Beginnings to Avoid .....	8
Writing Supporting Paragraphs .....	8
Effective Transitions .....	9
Writing the Conclusion .....	11
Ways to Conclude the Paper .....	12
Endings to Avoid .....	12
Editing .....	13
Revising .....	13
Revision: Taking Another Look .....	14
Manuscript Form .....	16

## **The Research Process**

Types of Research Papers .....	17
Documentation .....	17
Internal Documentation .....	18
Suggestions for Using Quotations .....	19
Creating a "Works Cited" Page .....	21
Works Cited .....	22

## **Index**

## THE ISSUE OF WRITER'S INTEGRITY

In any research paper and often in literary analyses, you will be using the ideas, opinions, and even facts set forth by other writers. The use of another author's intellectual property requires that you scrupulously and properly document your sources to avoid damaging your own integrity as a writer.

**AVOID** the following as you quote or paraphrase other authors

- Leaving out words, phrases, or sentences that change the meaning of the original work
- Couching quoted material in a way that creates an impression contrary to that which the author intended. [Note: "Couching" refers to the language you use to introduce a quotation, such as, "Edwin Markham reveals this dissatisfaction with the line ...," or "Heathcliff was cruel when he said ...," or "Ruskin thinks... ."]
- Intentionally using a quotation out of context, thereby manipulating the author's original meaning
- Deliberately manufacturing or making up references, quoted material, statistics, or data

### Plagiarism

The *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* defines plagiarism as "the act of using another person's ideas or expressions in your writing without acknowledging the source" (21). Below are the three most common acts of plagiarism:

- word-for-word pirating of written material
- deceptive paraphrasing, in which you follow the general sentence structure of the writer's material, but insert an occasional word, phrase, or sentence of your own
- unacknowledged use of information that is not in the realm of general information (see next page)

Using legitimate sources to support your arguments not only demonstrates the validity of your ideas, it also exhibits your enthusiasm for learning. Research, however, must always be properly documented.

# WHEN AND WHAT TO DOCUMENT

## BE SURE TO DOCUMENT

- every quotation
- every paraphrase
- every reference you make, even when you do not quote or paraphrase (e.g. Smith notes that...)
- every idea unique to a single source
- all information unique to a single source

## BE SURE TO QUOTE (to cite the exact wording)

- when giving the wording of laws, official rulings, and important edicts
- when citing mathematical, scientific, and other formulae
- when a statement is hypothetical (i.e. subject to confirmation or refutation)
- when the exact words of a writer seem to be absolutely essential
- when a significant thought has been particularly well expressed

## BE SURE TO PARAPHRASE (to restate something in your own words)

- lengthy discussions (Be careful in doing this; the idea is to reduce the discussion to its main ideas, but you have to be careful not to distort the original emphasis.)
- large bodies of factual data

## DO NOT QUOTE OR PARAPHRASE

- general knowledge, otherwise known as encyclopedic information (information found in three or more sources even if it is new to you)

## WHEN IN DOUBT, CITE IT!

See the Documentation section for instructions on how to cite sources within your paper and prepare a thorough bibliography (“Works Cited” page).

**In many classes, your final paper is simply the culminating step in a project that comprises several phases from prewriting to publishing. Sacrificing your integrity on any part of the process means that all of your work on the process to that point is equally suspect. The act of plagiarism, then, has a cumulative effect that could result in a failing grade for the quarter. Plagiarism cannot be excused as a lapse in judgment because plagiarism requires forethought and planning. Many teachers believe that such a serious breach of honor should result in similarly serious consequences, such as rescinding college recommendations. Remember, the consequences you might suffer as a result of plagiarism are always greater and longer-lasting than any higher grade you might steal through unethical behavior.**

# THE WRITING PROCESS

*Prewriting, composing, editing, revising, and publishing* are five steps in the process of writing. By their very nature, these terms are limited because they do not exist as independent actions, but as sequential stages that overlap. While engaged in the writing process, you often will find yourself composing as you prewrite, editing as you compose, and even revising as you publish. The process also differs for various writing tasks. Sometimes you may take a piece of writing from prewriting through drafting and revising to publishing. At other times, you may return to an earlier piece of writing that becomes a source for a further draft. In any case, you should learn the skills involved throughout the writing process in all its phases so that you can use writing to clarify your thinking and become versatile practitioners of the art and craft of writing.

In the *prewriting* phase, generate ideas.

In the *composing* phase, develop and organize ideas.

In the *editing* phase, identify errors in spelling, mechanics, organization, etc.

In the *revising* phase, clarify and refine writing.

In the *publishing* phase, formally present your work in a prescribed format.

## Prewriting

In the *prewriting* phase, you generate ideas for your writing. Prewriting activities help you to

- discover what you think about the subject/topic
- understand the topic and purpose of the writing assignment
- identify the audience (reader)
- limit the topic to a manageable and appropriate idea
- identifying connections among ideas, patterns, or important themes

Prewriting activities might include

- reading — be sure to take notes as you read
- discussing a topic with classmates — again, take notes
- interviewing an expert — again, take notes
- brainstorming a list of ideas for an essay
- writing in a journal
- answering the questions “why,” “how,” or “to what extent” about your topic
- creating an outline to organize ideas, specific examples, and textual evidence

## Outlining

Sketching a rough outline before you begin composing will give you a sense of organization and allow you to see quickly if you have enough support for your ideas. A more formal outline serves the same purpose, differing from the rough version in two ways: (1) the thesis statement is clearly stated on the outline, and (2) a specific outline format is followed. You must remember several rules for outlining:

1. arrange items of information in sets (For example, if you have an A, you must have a B; if you have a 1, you must have a 2)
2. use periods after all letters and numbers
3. capitalize the first letter of each topic only through the first set of small letters
4. do not put examples or quotations in the outline
5. double-space the entire outline

## Title

## I. Your Topic

- A.
- B.
- C.

## Thesis:

## II. Your First Support

## A. First assertion

- 1. First example
  - a. evidence
  - b. commentary
- 2. Second example
  - a. evidence
  - b. commentary

## III. Your Second Assertion

## A. First example

- 1. First point
  - a. evidence
  - b. commentary
- 2. Second point
  - a. evidence
  - b. commentary

## B. Second example

- 1.
  - a.
  - b.
- 2.
  - a.
  - b.

## IV. Your Third Assertion

## A. First example

- 1. First point
  - a. evidence
  - b. commentary
- 2. Second point
  - a. evidence
  - b. commentary

## B. Second example

- 1.
  - a.
  - b.
- 2.
  - a.
  - b.

## V. Conclusion [refer to CHS webpage for full example]

*Study this outline, paying special attention to the spacing and the format; indent each sub-heading one-half inch.*

## Composing

In the *composing* phase, you discover what you know about your topic and make decisions about developing and organizing your ideas. Insights gained from the prewriting activities will help you shape ideas into meaning for your reader.

Composing activities help you to

- clarify your thinking on the topic
- focus on an audience and form for your writing (e.g. essay, narrative, poem, etc.)
- discover relationships between ideas
- write in an effective style

Composing activities might include

- developing your thesis statement
- choosing an appropriate form for a specific audience
- developing your own voice and style
- choosing and maintaining a consistent point of view
- developing ideas using logical argument, specific examples, and supporting textual evidence
- preparing a draft to focus the purpose of your writing

### Writing the thesis statement

Remember that an effective thesis statement should

- NOT be an obvious opinion that every reader already shares
- NEVER ask a question
- reflect your opinion without stating “I believe”
- state your main idea clearly in one complete, declarative sentence
- focus on an idea that can be supported by evidence rather than emotion
- highlight a narrow aspect of the topic so that you can develop evidence fully;
- be located in the introductory paragraph, following necessary background information (see “Ways to Begin”)

You or your teacher may decide upon the purpose of the essay, but all essays share a common goal: An effective thesis statement always provides an answer to a specific question.

*Question: Why does the author give his character certain qualities?*

Thesis statement: Lord Jim, Conrad’s title character, proves to be a man capable of imagining the best in himself and in mankind generally, a belief that controls his every action.

Thesis statement: By making Ivan Denisovich a simple carpenter, Solzhenitsyn reveals that heroism comes from internal qualities rather than from an external, privileged lifestyle.

Thesis statement: By giving Satan admirable characteristics, Milton presents the realistic view that good and evil often intermingle within the individual.

*Question: What is the author’s purpose for writing this novel (or play or poem, etc.)?*

Thesis statement: In *The Tempest*, Shakespeare underscores the importance of justice tempered by mercy when Prospero restores order to his kingdom while overcoming his desire for revenge.

Thesis statement: William Golding laments mankind’s innately evil nature.

Thesis statement: T.S. Eliot’s “The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock” echoes the fruitless struggle to find meaning and self-worth in a sterile society.

*Question: Why does the author use a specific technique? or To what effect does an author's technique serve his/her purpose?*

Thesis statement: In *The Canterbury Tales*, Chaucer's ironic tone intensifies when the speaker drops the mask of indignant social critic and dons another mask of unaffected, accepting observer of mankind.

Thesis statement: In his sensitive Katerina, Shakespeare presents a more convincing, realistic character portrayal than does Chaucer with his shrewish caricature of the Wife of Bath.

Thesis statement: By trapping Rainsford on a sinister, isolated island, Richard Connell provides the perfect setting for highlighting Rainsford's courage and resourcefulness in "The Most Dangerous Game."

## Revising your thesis

Look at your sentence structure. A compound sentence may cause confusion by focusing on two seemingly equal ideas. In this case, the writer does not show how one idea is related to another. The improved version places the less important idea in a dependent clause.

WEAK: Macbeth fails to recognize that contemplation is really his strength, and he commits atrocities by going against his own nature.

BETTER: Macbeth misinterprets his thoughtful nature as a weakness and, therefore, subdues his tendency to deliberate, allowing himself to commit atrocities.

Eliminate figurative language from the thesis statement.

WEAK: Religion is the phoenix bird of civilization.

BETTER: As long as mankind can conceive the idea of a god, religion will provide a spiritual reason for existence.

Check to see that you have eliminated vague words and slang expressions such as "things," "something," "a person," "great," and "it" (without a clear antecedent).

## Writing the introduction

The introduction to any essay serves multiple purposes. This paragraph must announce the overall topic, clearly state the thesis, and set the tone of the paper.

The introduction should fulfill certain requirements:

1. The opening sentence should state the overall subject of the paper (i.e. Shakespeare's female characters)
2. Quotations from a secondary source should not be used in an introductory paragraph
3. The introduction must include sufficient background to introduce the subject of the thesis statement
4. The introduction must introduce each of the primary assertions to be argued in your essay
5. The development of the introduction must flow smoothly and coherently from the opening sentence
6. The thesis must be stated clearly and in a single sentence

## Ways to begin your essay

*TOPIC: Portrait of Agamemnon*

Agamemnon's own actions are analogous to Paris' childish behavior. Agamemnon takes Briseis from Achilles just as Paris took Helen from Menelaus. Paris runs from battle, and Agamemnon allows his pride to flourish unabated even though he rarely distinguishes himself on the battlefield. Neither has much compassion for those they have wronged but, instead, demonstrate a marked inability to determine the feelings of those around them. If Paris and Agamemnon could exchange places with the other, the reader would

hardly notice a difference.

*Topic: Strong Women in Literature*

Contrary to popular opinion, strong women have been featured in literature throughout the ages. Homer's Penelope demonstrates the same courage and fortitude as her husband, Odysseus. Clytemnestra, from Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*, possesses a strength and sense of morality greater than her husband's. More recently, Shakespeare created Desdemona, a woman whose nobility is perfectly matched to Othello's. Though unfamiliar with the concept of "equality of the sexes," these authors prove their admiration for strong women.

*A Complete Introduction*

In *Lord of the Flies*, William Golding explores humanity's darker nature. He places a group of English prep school boys on a lush, tropical island with no adults—a seeming childhood paradise. Not long into their adventure, however, the boys begin to exhibit changes in their behavior. Their self-imposed system of rules is overcome by petty jealousies. Rivalries between groups of boys steadily deteriorate into a total breakdown of law and order. By the end, these children prove capable of the most frightening savagery. The collapse of the boys' island society suggests that all human civilization masks a beastly core.

## Beginnings to avoid

The following methods for beginning an essay are typical of the apathetic writer.

*A dictionary definition:* No real reason exists for invoking the exact words of the dictionary. Telling your reader a definition that he/she already knows wastes his time and weakens his interest.

*Plot summary:* Although you will need to include some reference to plot in a critical essay, to begin with a summation simply wastes the reader's time. Assume your reader has read the work but has not had the opportunity to think about or discuss the work. Use elements of the plot only to focus attention on the parts that relate to your thesis statement.

*Irrelevant historical or biographical resume:* If the topic of your paper is Hamlet's sanity, a summation of Shakespeare's life simply reveals your weak grasp of the subject matter. Your reader will not see the direction you are taking and will, accordingly, read on with impatience or, even worse, not read on at all.

*Question:* To begin with a question in no way advances the consideration of your topic. Furthermore, your reader will resent being made a participant in the problem he/she expects you to solve.

*Apologies:* Apologies destroy your reader's faith in you. If you need to apologize for a lack of knowledge or skill or both, you should not be writing but preparing to write. Apologies are a sure sign of lack of preparation.

*Reference to the process of reading:* Any reference to the actual process of fact gathering is irrelevant. The reader is not interested in how you gathered the data; he/she wants to receive only the results of your findings.

*Reference to the reader, writer, or paper:* This flaw is usually accompanied by one or more of the others and represents a slip in point of view or focus. It is a sure way to distract your reader.

## Writing supporting paragraphs

The body of your paper comprises assertions that support your thesis statement. As you gather evidence to bolster your ideas, you will need to consider the following:

- ways you can most effectively develop the supporting paragraphs—by comparison or contrast, cause and effect, etc. (see "Methods for ordering specific details")
- the most effective order of your paragraphs—as from least to most powerful argument, from several causes to an overall effect, etc.
- arrangement of details within the paragraphs so that each paragraph represents a unified idea

- ways to achieve coherence (see “Effective transitions”)
- proper documentation of primary and secondary sources

### **Developing body paragraphs**

First, think of a supporting paragraph as a miniature essay having its own beginning, middle, and end. The topic sentence states the main idea of a paragraph, just as the thesis states the controlling idea of an essay or research paper. A good topic sentence also contains key words that echo the thesis statement and limit the content of the paragraph.

Your supporting paragraphs should begin with a clear topic sentence that establishes the focus of your paragraph. Next, you should make a strong assertion; that is, introduce your first argument with a declarative statement that refers to a specific example. Each example should be validated by textual evidence properly cited. The strongest arguments will present two or more examples. End your paragraph with a strong statement that forcefully restates the underlying idea. This final statement should clearly connect the main idea of the paragraph to your overall thesis. The following is an example of a supporting paragraph:

#### **See CHS web page for example**

Sometimes a transition sentence connecting the new paragraph to the one preceding it may be preferable at the beginning of your paragraph. In this case, move the assertion to the second sentence in the paragraph (Williams 46).

### **Determining the size of body paragraphs**

Usually, a well-developed paragraph will contain four to seven sentences depending upon the method chosen to arrange the supporting details. In special situations, however, you may prefer to make limited use of a shorter paragraph. For example, a transition between two long paragraphs on different subjects may require a transition or “linking” paragraph (Williams 48). Obviously, a short paragraph coming between two longer ones will call attention to itself on the printed page. Such a paragraph is, therefore, useful for the dramatic presentation of an idea (48).

### **Methods for ordering specific details**

A good writer takes care in choosing the best method for organizing each body paragraph. An interesting multi-paragraph paper will feature several types of paragraphs from a variety of orders.

*Order of time or sequence:* Arrange your supports to show the chronological progression from first to last or from beginning to end.

*Order of importance:* Build the steps of your argument from those of least importance to those of most importance to ensure a more persuasive progression.

*Contrast or comparison:* Point out similarities and differences, either by comparing an idea to another it resembles or by contrasting it to another from which it differs.

*Analysis:* Break an idea into its logical parts. In literary analysis, an assertion is backed up by a supporting quotation, then followed by a statement explaining the relevance and significance of the quoted details. This pattern may be used more than once in a single paragraph.

*Cause and effect:* This method begins with a cause, stated in general terms, and then lists specific effects from that cause.

### **Effective transitions**

Within the supporting paragraph, as within the entire paper, coherence is dependent upon organizing the material to achieve a smooth flow and using transitional devices. The most common transitional devices are as follows:

*Transitional words and phrases:* [see list on following page]

*Synonyms and other substitutes:* In order to prevent the numbing effect of repetitive words and phrases, choose synonyms that sound natural and reinforce your point.

*Pronouns:* Pronoun substitutes for key words will also help to prevent wooden repetitions of the antecedent.

*Parallel constructions:* Repeating grammatical constructions such as nouns, adjectives, gerunds, participles, or phrases “not only lends rhythm and balance to prose, but also provides useful transitions” (Williams 53)

The following paragraph illustrates some of the connecting devices explained above:

Not only does Shakespeare define the initial dilemma, but the Bard also reveals the frailty and mortality of his tragic hero. After the murder, Macbeth becomes subject to the beckoning of the apparitions, the nagging of his wife, and the stinging of his own mental torture. A.C. Bradley states, “This bold, ambitious man of action has ... the imagination of a poet—an imagination ... extremely sensitive to impressions of a certain kind” (200). After killing Duncan, Macbeth is paralyzed by his poet’s imagination, which takes a hideous deed and makes it, in his mind, a hundredfold worse. He imagines that the blood on his hands would “the multitudinous seas incarnadine” (2.2.62). Likewise, the ghost of Banquo—another creation of his own mind—terrorizes him at the banquet. The “horrible shadow” (3.4.106-107) is a manifestation of Macbeth’s own guilt and remorse for the murder of his friend. This psychological terror actually evokes sympathy for the treasonous king. An old proverb states that there is no harsher judge of one than oneself. If so, then the reader is moved to pity rather than condemn Macbeth because the tormented king suffers so terribly at the hands of the ultimate judge, his own conscience.

## Transitional words and phrases

Choose appropriate linking expressions to show relationships between ideas:

### *Opposite ideas*

- on the other hand
- on the contrary
- instead
- despite this fact
- actually

### *Similar ideas*

- similarly
- likewise
- furthermore
- moreover
- in addition
- at the same time
- further
- more particularly

### *Argument for or against*

- besides
- after all
- in fact
- otherwise
- by contrast
- in any case
- certainly
- at any rate
- all the same
- incidentally
- indeed

### *Showing sequential order*

- at first
- at last
- meanwhile
- soon
- simultaneously
- shortly thereafter
- by this time
- so far
- later
- finally
- first (not “firstly”)
- second
- third
- then
- next

### *Regardless*

- nevertheless
- however
- in spite of
- nonetheless
- despite
- because
- for

### *Explanations*

- in effect
- in other words
- under the circumstances

### *Paralleling coordinators*

- not only ... but also
- either ... or
- both ... and
- neither ... nor
- if so ... then
- not ... but
- ... as well as ...

### *Examples*

- in a typical instance
- in other words
- for instance
- in fact
- for example
- in broad terms
- namely
- that is
- more specifically

### *Cause and effect*

- consequently
- accordingly
- as a result
- then
- therefore
- thus
- hence
- evidently
- subsequently

## Writing the conclusion

The supporting paragraphs compile and present the evidence to support the thesis statement, but more remains to be done. The last part of the essay is the conclusion, which directs your reader beyond the essay by making implications about the ideas presented. In “The Practical Stylist,” Sheridan Baker confirms that the conclusion “reiterates, summarizes, and emphasizes with decorous fervor” (21). This paragraph is your last chance to convince the audience that your ideas are, indeed, valid. The conclusion is not just the end of your essay; it is the point of your essay, declaring its significance.

You must recognize that in nonscientific subjects such as literature absolute proofs are rare; thus, your conclusions will not be proved beyond the shadow of a doubt. The lingering doubt(s) is, in fact, part of the joy of studying literature. Still, the conclusion should inspire your reader’s confidence that you have a reasoned point of view and have omitted nothing in pursuing evidence and in developing your arguments. For this reason, your conclusion must serve as the climax of the essay. However well-written, your essay will surely fizzle if finished weakly.

## Steps in writing the conclusion

1. Begin by restating the thesis. Use different words, consulting a thesaurus to find effective synonyms for key words. Avoid such trite phrases as “In conclusion” or “In this paper I have tried to prove... .”
2. In a long essay, the conclusion should summarize the major points.
3. Think carefully about the significance of your thesis statement as it relates to other ideas, thereby stressing its importance in a more universal sense. Your conclusion should not present any new ideas but should extend the idea to incorporate some larger, universal significance. Think of your conclusion as an extrapolation—an inference or estimation of importance based upon the facts presented. Ask yourself, “So what?” This extrapolation may require several sentences to explain the extended idea fully.

## Suggestions to consider

A persuasive essay may end with a recommendation for a specific course of action. This kind of conclusion often poses a question that has been implied in the essay, then answers the question firmly: [literary example].

An essay on character analysis may conclude with observations on how the traits examined are related to the work as a whole. If the individual is good but comes to a bad end, does this fact cause you to draw any conclusion about the class or type to which the character belongs? Or does it illustrate the author’s view of human life? Or both? Do the traits explain why the character helps or hinders other characters in the work? What does the character tell us about society or the human condition? Questions like these should be answered in your conclusion.

An essay analyzing author’s style may conclude with an evaluation of the author’s technique or the importance of the technique as it affects the message or one’s appreciation of the work (Roberts 201).

An essay analyzing structure may conclude with an evaluation of the writer’s success in arranging the work. Are all the parts necessary? Do events occur in the best order? Do all the minor events contribute logically to the major ones, thereby contributing to the unity of the work? (Roberts 134).

An essay assessing the author’s purpose should reference the enduring, timeless message that readers of the work will always gain.

## Some other ways to end

- with a concluding opinion that grows from and reflects the preceding evidence
- with a speculative statement that leaves the subject open for further thought
- with a reference to a literary parallel, a brief comparison to another work of literature that reflects the same idea or theme

- with a return to a problem or image in the opening paragraph so that the essay has a sense of symmetry
- with an ironic twist or unexpected turn of thought

## Ways to conclude the paper

The following examples from student essays show that the writers were aware that “all good essays must come to a good end.” Although incomplete, each example involves a certain amount of extrapolation, of “going beyond” the specific topic of the paper.

A related idea implied by the thesis (Topic: Euripides’ Attitude toward Greek Women):

One may agree, then, that Euripides recognizes the honor accorded women in Greek society. Still, he promotes moderation in honoring women so as to avoid a return to matriarchy. Despite the respect he grants his female characters, one should detect his wish that women be less desirous of influencing Man’s destiny.

An added insight into the subject matter (Topic: The Role of Early Science):

Inasmuch as science gave the Greeks intellectual freedom, it has given twentieth-century mankind physical freedom; furthermore, it has tremendously expanded life expectancy. Thanks to technology, today’s worker has been freed from much common drudgery. This leisure time, moreover, provides opportunity to enjoy and produce those arts so highly valued by the Greeks—architecture, literature, sculpture, and music.

A reversal or alternative (Topic: Luther: Renaissance Man):

Martin Luther felt he had caused so much trouble in the Church and brought so much confusion to the minds of men over the question of salvation that his only alternative was to break from the Church altogether. Had he recanted and stayed, however, he would have caused the same reawakening to the importance of faith.

A reference to the past (Topic: Influence of Chinese Art on the West):

Inspiration, however, is not to be confused with limitation—for artists in the Western hemisphere soon departed from basic Chinese lessons and developed their own mediums of expression. The primary importance of ancient Chinese art, then, lay in the fact that it provided basic motivation for Western artists—a motivation that led these aesthetic-minded people to produce a new artistic “revolution” of their own.

Relating the thesis statement to the author’s purpose (Topic: Characterization of Simon as a Paragon of Good):

Without doubt, there are more symbolic items and personalities in “Lord of the Flies” than can be attributed merely to the desire to tell a gripping story. Golding uses the island as a microcosm of society to examine the failings of human nature. In that smaller world, (and by extension, in our larger one) humans betray a shocking readiness to succumb to savagery. The driving forces of self-gratification are present in every person from birth; thus, the boys lack restraint without adult supervision. The hidden, unsuspected power of these forces, or of the Lord of the Flies, as Golding chooses to personify them, is mankind’s true nemesis. An invitation to freedom—from parental authority, from moral or legal restraints, or from any other rein on our all-too-natural, primitive urges—is an invitation to disaster, as history has proved time and time again.

## Endings to avoid

The following methods for ending an essay are typical of the apathetic writer. These examples from student essays illustrate the writer’s inability to sense that the final effect on the reader must be one of completion. A weak ending spoils the effect of a strong beginning and middle.

*Introduction of new information*

An ending is obviously no place to start again. At this point, if the writer has handled the thesis well, the reader will have been enlightened about the role art plays in daily life. Your reader will not relish being asked to begin considering the income of artists, nor have any particular interest in remedies for their situation. This topic is better saved for another essay.

*Summary*

An essay is not a lecture, nor even a speech. It is written and permanent, not a spoken and transient exposition. There is no justification for a formal summation of the points made. A summary usually casts the spell of redundancy over the entire essay. The reader who wants to review need only look back a paragraph or so.

*Final apologies*

Never apologize for your essay. The reader's response will be one of doubt, especially concerning the writer's credibility. Present your paper to stand on its own merit.

*Final admonishments*

No one likes to be scolded, particularly the innocent reader. A tone of preaching will cause your reader to resent having taken the time to read your essay.

*Melodramatic*

No one likes to read a conclusion that is dramatic and makes sweeping or alarmist assumptions.

*Underdeveloped extrapolation*

Your essay should lead up to something; do not throw in a sweeping generality that leaves your reader cold and confused. Extrapolations must be a logical result of your arguments to this point.

## Editing

In the *editing* stage, you should work to free your writing from grammatical and mechanical errors. The pride you take in your writing reflects your seriousness as a writer; proofreading is crucial to your success.

**See CHS web page for example**

## Revising

In the *revising* phase, you should work to clarify and refine your writing. Frequently, writers make revisions in the early stages of writing while working in writing-response groups and in teacher-writer conferences. Revising might involve reworking the written expression so that it clearly and forcefully conveys your ideas, rearranging words or sentences to create a desired effect, editing and inserting punctuation and correcting spelling to assist your reader. The revising process takes your paper beyond mere editing and should proceed to rewriting.

Revising activities help you to

- challenge and clarify your ideas
- refine your style and structure
- consider the responses from your readers
- evaluate the quality of your written expression
- finalize your written expression for publishing

Revising activities include

- revising according to conventions of the form and/or primary requirements of the assignment
- varying sentence structure to control pace and rhythm through sentence flow
- reworking to maintain parallel structure: subordinate and coordinate ideas within sentences
- choosing the most appropriate word to convey your meaning

- editing
- ensuring that all sources are properly credited

## Revision: Taking another look

### *Why revise?*

After you have finished one or more drafts of the essay, you should begin revising your paper, a process that may take more time than writing the first draft. As you plan your time for writing, then, you should allow several days for revision. Often, you can view your work with a more critical eye after you have let some time pass.

Your teacher has pointed out that true revision of the essay goes well beyond simply editing for misspelled words and correcting punctuation. At this stage of the writing process, you should focus on clarifying your message by changing words, sentences, or even whole paragraphs. Remember, you are trying to convey an idea to your reader. At the same time, you strive to sustain your reader's interest by using lively language that creates energy and allows your voice to emerge. Careful attention to style will help breathe life into your essay.

### *Begin by looking at specific words you have used*

Skim through your draft and circle all forms of “to be” and other linking verbs in your essay (is, are, was, were, should be, seems, etc.). If you have used an excessive number of these verbs, you should consider changing some of them to active verbs to add energy to your writing style.

Examine the other verbs you have used. Be aware that the passive voice (a form of the verb “to be” plus another verb participle) is useful when you do not know or do not wish to emphasize the subject, as in, “Precautions should *be taken* in order to prevent a breach of security.” You achieve power and clarity, however, when you choose an active voice verb.

Compare the following sentences:

- The crystal-clear sound of bells was heard.
- We heard the crystal-clear sound of bells.

Make certain that you have maintained consistent verb tense. For literary analysis essays, use the present tense: “Macbeth declares that he will bring ‘fate into the list’ and challenges all those who threaten his reign.” Even though the action logically occurs in the past, you are analyzing in the present. Furthermore, the present tense emphasizes the work's timeless nature and its importance to your reader right now.

Consider your audience when choosing specific words. Have you used vocabulary that is too simplistic, too elementary? If so, you run the risk of insulting your audience. Conversely, have you used too many sophisticated words so that your style sounds pretentious and no longer reflects your personality? In revision, experiment with words that are appropriate for your purpose and audience (Elbow 32-37). Keep in mind that exact synonyms are rare; before pulling a new word from the thesaurus, look up the precise definition in a good dictionary.

Eliminate all clichés and overused expressions that have become trite. If a phrase that you have heard before comes to mind quickly as you write, try to find a fresh way to express the same idea.

### *Examine whole sentences*

Consider sentence structure. Count the number of compound sentences in your draft. Can some of the compound sentences be improved by subordinating one idea to the other, thereby showing a clearer relationship? “She demonstrated superior writing skills, and the company hired her” becomes more precise with subordination: “The company hired her because she demonstrated superior writing skills.”

Analyze sentence patterns in your essay. Do all your sentences reflect the same pattern of subject/verb/object, for instance? If so, experiment with restructuring some of your sentences.

Glance over your essay to check the comparative length of the sentences. If all your sentences are long and complex, your reader may become mired in words and lose the message. Try interspersing a few short sentences. Conversely, if most of your sentences are short and choppy, think about combining some for balance and variety.

### ***Consider whole paragraphs***

Analyze the supporting paragraphs to determine whether or not you have developed them fully with details, examples, illustrations, and quotations that “show” rather than “tell.” Paragraphs that merely state the idea in abstract or general terms will be far less convincing than those that offer specific and concrete examples. Consider adding details during revision.

Check to see that you have arranged your supporting paragraphs in the most effective order. As a general rule, you should place your most powerful, most convincing argument last so that it will have the greatest impact on your reader.

Locate transitions and check to see that you have enough, that you have varied them, and that they add coherence. In addition to transitions between paragraphs, make sure you have included them between sentences. Do you hear some echo of the thesis in supporting paragraphs as well, so that the whole body of the paper relates clearly to the thesis statement?

Be certain that supporting paragraphs have unity. The assertion should relate to the thesis statement, details and evidence should support the assertion, and the concluding statement should offer some interesting insight into the subject or transition to the next assertion.

### ***Other general tips***

Read the essay aloud, more than once if necessary. Verbalizing your work will help you locate awkward constructions and expressions.

Have someone whose judgment you trust read your essay. Get a second reader’s opinion if possible and weigh carefully the advice you receive.

### ***Recognize common usage problems***

Avoid beginning sentences with “There is,” “There are,” and “It is.” An indefinite reference such as “There are several obstacles” can be changed to “Several obstacles are... .”

Eliminate expressions such as

a lot	I think	good	I feel
pretty good	thing	nice	different than
okay	kind of	sort of	

Avoid using “so” as a coordinating conjunction: “He is my best friend, so we walk to school together every day.”

Avoid using “so” when you mean “so that”: “We finished our homework early so that (not “so”) we could go to the play.” Better still, reconstruct your sentence: “We finished our homework early because we wanted to play.”

Eliminate first person (I, me, my, mine, we us, our, ours) and second person (you, your, yours).

Do not use contractions and abbreviations.

Eliminate incorrect pronoun/antecedent reference: “Everyone left their books in the classroom” should be corrected to “Everyone left his books in the classroom.” The pronouns everyone, anyone, everybody, somebody, anybody, each, either, neither, one, no one, and everyone are singular and require singular antecedents.

Avoid the distracting “his/her” usage when referring to a general person. As a rule, use the pronoun that refers to your own sex: Boys refer to “his,” and girls refer to “hers.” Another option is to make the pronoun and

antecedent plural: Change “Each student must revise his/her own rough draft” to “Students must revise their own rough drafts.”

Avoid confusing the verb “accept” with the preposition “except.”

CORRECT: I will accept the nomination for president.

CORRECT: Everyone except me wants the nomination.

Avoid confusing affect and effect. “Affect” is always a verb and means “influence”; “effect” is a usually a noun (see the exception below).

CORRECT: The photographs of the war-torn nation affected us deeply, moving us to tears.

CORRECT: The effect of the earthquake was widely felt.

You may also use “effect” as a verb meaning “to accomplish or bring about”: The principal will effect some changes in the bell schedule this year.

Do not use the double negative “cannot help but”; change the wording of your sentence to avoid this problem:

CORRECT: I cannot help wishing for more time.

**See CHS web page for example**

## **Publishing in manuscript form**

Listed below are the requirements that you must meet on the final draft of your composition. When you meet these guidelines, your composition will be pleasing in appearance as well as mechanically correct.

### **Appearance**

- Type all papers unless otherwise directed by your teacher.
- Use Times New Roman, 12-point font only.
- Observe standard one-inch margins.
- Put your name, your teacher’s name, the course and period, and the due date in the upper left corner, single spaced.
- Number pages in the upper right corner, beginning with the second page.
- Double-space all papers.
- Give your paper an appropriate title and center it between the heading and the introductory paragraph.
- Maintain regular spacing between paragraphs; do not have extra returns at the end of paragraphs.
- Indent the first line of each paragraph one-half inch.
- In the event that you cannot type your paper: use blue or black ballpoint pen only; maintain margins on both the left and right sides; and write on only one side of each page only.
- Space once after any end punctuation mark (period, question mark, semicolon, etc.) and a colon.
- Do not put spaces on either side of a dash.
- Treat an ellipsis as a three-letter word, putting a space before the first dot and after the last. If the ellipsis is at the end of a sentence, put a space after the last dot and then the final period.

**See CHS web page for example**

## THE RESEARCH PROCESS

When you write a research paper, the writing process remains essentially the same as for any essay. Begin with a thesis statement you believe you can support; then compile evidence to substantiate your point of view. You will not be expected to come up with new information; rather, you will derive part of the evidence for the essay by “researching” what already has been written about the subject. Your objective should be to “search again” through existing information in order to present a fresh viewpoint and to synthesize your findings.

### Characteristics of the critical research paper

- features a topic on which two or more opinions exist
- requires you to outline the pros and cons of an issue
- requires you to make a judgment on the issue and choose a side to support
- allows you to argue your position logically and offer researched ideas, facts, and opinions as part of the evidence in your essay
- answers high-level thinking questions such as “Why?” and “To what degree?” or “Judge the importance of...”

### Examples of topics

- The role of women in ancient Greek society as compared to Penelope in Homer’s *The Odyssey*
- The impact of Brown versus the Board of Education on the cause of civil rights

From the subject, which is stated in rather general terms, you then consider the possible sides of the argument, choose a point of view to support, and seek to persuade your reader of the validity of your argument. Research for the critical analysis of a literary work will focus upon finding literary critics’ ideas and opinions that parallel your own.

### Possible thesis statements developed from general subjects

- Though popular history depicts a seeming oppression of women in ancient Greek society, *The Odyssey* presents women in powerful roles.
- The Supreme Court decision in the case of Brown versus the Board of Education has been critical in advancing the cause of civil rights in the United States during the past three decades.
- Ray Bradbury skillfully manipulates foreshadowing in his stories in order to create suspense and provide dramatic irony for the reader.
- Although American representative democracy was patterned after the British Parliament, the American system provides for a government that is more directly influenced by popular vote.

## Documentation

### Works cited general information

When you are citing books, normally arrange the information in the following order

1. Author’s name (last, first)
2. Title of a part of the book
3. Title of the book
4. Name of the editor, translator, or compiler
5. Edition used
6. Number(s) of the volume(s) used
7. Name of the series
8. Place of publication, name of the publisher, and date of publication
9. Page numbers
10. Supplementary bibliographic information and annotation (Gibaldi 89)

When you are citing periodicals, normally arrange the information in the following order:

1. Author's name
2. Title of the article
3. Name of the periodical
4. Series number or name
5. Volume number (for a scholarly journal)
6. Date of publication
7. Page numbers (Gibaldi 122)

## Internal documentation

*The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* by Joseph Gibaldi, printed in 2003 by the Modern Language Association of America, offers a simplified documentation form currently favored in many college classrooms. You use no numbered footnotes or endnotes. Within the text of the essay, you document the source of the quotation, paraphrase, information, or idea, using a parenthetical reference. Generally, the author's last name and the page number from which the material is taken appear at the end of the citation or at the end of the sentence. This abbreviated documentation corresponds to a full listing of all sources at the end of the paper. The single documentation page at the end of the essay is labeled "Works Cited." Here the reader can find full documentation information by locating the author's last name or title if there is no last name.

## Documenting Sources

Instead of footnoting or endnoting, simply acknowledge the source briefly in a parenthetical reference within your text:

The moral human being might agree that "the possession of truth is the ultimate good of the human mind" (Adler 63).

The information in parentheses tells the reader to look on the works cited page for full bibliographical information under the author's last name and reveals the page number where this quotation may be found. Then include the complete bibliographical information in the works cited: Adler, Mortimer J. *Six Great Ideas*. New York: Macmillan. 1981.

## Information Needed in Parenthetical Documentation: Sample Entries

Usually you will need only the author's last name followed by a space (no mark of punctuation) and the page number. Place the period outside the parentheses: (Adler 63). If you cite the author's name in your text, however, omit it in parenthetical documentation, using only the page number.

Adler suggests that "a society should seek to achieve only as much of an equality of conditions as justice requires, and no more than that" (139).

To document a book with two authors, you may place the names within your text or inside the parentheses.

The subject matter of poetry can be any experience that we deem relevant (Norton and Gretton 101-105).

Norton and Gretton assert that the subject matter of poetry can be any experience that we deem relevant (101-105).

3. To document a long, indented quotation, skip one space *after* the final mark of punctuation at the end of the text and insert the parenthetical information.

The dramatist, unlike the writer of prose or poetry, cannot speak directly to the audience; instead, he must choose a vehicle through which to convey his message. Shakespeare, however, speaks in myriad voices. T. S. Eliot makes this observation about the poet's voice:

If you seek for Shakespeare, you will find him only in the characters he creates: for the one thing in common between the characters is that no one but Shakespeare could have created any of them. The world of a great poetic dramatist is a world in which the creator is everywhere present, and everywhere hidden. (102)

4. Cite all relevant page numbers if you are paraphrasing or quoting from different parts of a work.

(Eliot 36-38, 70-75)

5. To cite a multi-volume work, write the author's last name, the volume number, a colon, a space, and the page number(s). Do not use any abbreviations such as "p." or "vol.": (Asimov 1:6-8). If you wish to refer to an entire volume, however, place a comma after the author's name and use the abbreviation "vol."

Recent contributions to Shakespearean criticism have not ignored the importance of the history plays (Asimov, vol. 2).

6. If the work you are documenting appears on the works cited page by title rather than by author (such as an encyclopedia article, editorial, or anonymous work), use the whole title if it is brief or an abbreviation of it in place of the author's name. Be as brief as possible, but do use a key word close to the beginning of the title so that the reader can locate it readily on the works cited page. Punctuate the title or abbreviated title correctly.

("Space" 86)

7. If you have two or more works by the same author, write the author's last name, a comma, the whole or abbreviated title, space, and page number. Omit the author's name or title if you have already included it within the context of your sentence.

(Brooks, *First Encounters* 51)

8. To cite an indirect source, there are times when you cannot use the original source, as when an author quotes someone else's written or spoken words. To quote or paraphrase this material, insert the abbreviation "qtd. in" before the indirect source in which you found the information.

T. S. Eliot disagrees with Middleton Murry's critique of Milton: "Whatever may be our verdict on the development of English poetry since Milton, we must admit ... that Milton's magnificence led nowhere" (qtd. in Eliot 149).

9. To cite poems and classic plays, give the title, omit page numbers, and give divisions and line numbers separated by periods.

(Macbeth 5.1.10-12) (King Lear 1.2.5-7)

## Suggestions for using quotations

Careful use of quotations will bolster support for your own ideas and is critical for an effective essay. You will undoubtedly want to use direct quotations from other writers' works (secondary sources) as well as from the original or primary source if you are writing about a literary selection. Consider the following suggestions as you incorporate direct quotations into your text.

- Select quotations carefully, keeping them brief and using only those that clearly support your own ideas. Including long, irrelevant quotations will not enhance your writing and will serve only as "filler" that will actually detract from the essay and annoy your audience.
- Quote the exact words of the source. If you find it necessary to change any part of the quotation, be certain that you indicate this change clearly. Refer to the suggestions below and to the MLA Handbook.
- Introduce the quotation within the context of your own sentence so that the ideas flow coherently and logically. Consider using such phrases as:

"As Isaac Asimov says of Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* ..."

"Conrad says of his character Lord Jim ..."

“According to critic Cleanth Brooks ...”

- Avoid phrases of direct introduction.

“There are many speeches that show his courage, such as...”

“The following quotation will prove Shakespeare’s point ...”

“An example of Beowulf’s determination can be seen in these words ...”

- If you are using a *prose* quotation of no more than four typed lines, embed it within the text. You may place the quotation at the beginning or end of your sentence, or you may want to break up the quotation with your own words.

Golding makes us feel the terror of Ralph’s “scream of fright and anger and desperation,” cries that ‘became continuous and foaming’ (184).

6. For *prose* quotations of more than four typed lines, begin quoting the passage on a new line of text, indenting one inches from the left margin and one-half inch from the right margin. Note that the entire passage is single-spaced and that you do not use quotation marks. Do not indent the first line of the quotation more than the rest if you are quoting only one paragraph or part of one. You may find it convenient to omit part of the passage. In this case use an ellipsis. Treat an ellipsis as you would a three-letter word, with spaces on either side of it. If it comes at the end of a sentence, put a space after the ellipsis and before the final period.

In recent decades Lord Byron’s poetry has been compared unfavorably to the works of such contemporaries as Keats and Shelley. According to H. J. C. Grierson, however, the power of Byron’s verse demands respect:

Byron’s poetry ... has force, passion, humor and wit, narrative and descriptive power, oratorical fire and conversational ease and flow. Byron has been overestimated—the fact remains that English poetry would be greatly the poorer without the passionate, humorous, essentially human voice (114).

- If you are quoting *poetry*, you may include up to three lines of verse within the text. Use a slash to signify the poet’s line breaks. Notice that the citation at the end of the quotation indicates line numbers inside parentheses, followed by a period.

In “A Late Aubade,” Wilbur alludes to the *carpe diem* theme of English Cavalier poets when he says, ‘Time flies, and I need not rehearse / The rosebuds-theme of centuries of verse’ (22-23).

- When quoting more than three lines of *poetry*, begin on a new line of text, and indent one inch from the left margin. Omit quotation marks unless they appear in the original verse. End the quotation with the final mark of punctuation, followed by one space and the line numbers in parentheses.

Tennyson’s “Ulysses” affirms the importance of an active life when the hero proclaims:

Old age hath yet his honor and his toil.  
Death closes all: but something ere the end,  
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods. (50-53)

- Use brackets, not parentheses, if you need to add explanatory notes within a quotation.

Macduff inquires of the messenger, “The tyrant [Macbeth] has not battered at their peace?” (4.3.178).

- If a quotation contains what appears to be an error, enclose the word “sic” in brackets following the expression you wish to explain:

Samuel Pepys fills his diary with intricate detail: “The houses, too, so very thick thereabouts, and full of matter for burning, as pitch and tar, in Thames-street—and warehouses of oyle [sic] and wines and Brandy and other things” (39).

## Creating a “Works Cited” page

When you have completed writing your paper, you will compile an alphabetized list of all the sources you used in your paper. This section will be titled “Works Cited” and should be the last segment of your paper.

Use the following format for the works cited section of your paper:

- Begin your works cited on a new page.
- Use “Works Cited” as your title, centered on the page with a one-inch top margin. Double space between your title and the first line of entry.
- Begin each new entry at the left margin. All following lines of the same entry are indented five spaces from the left margin.
- Do *not* number your entries.
- Double space after every entry.
- Alphabetize your entries using the first word of the entry. Determine the order of the entries by using the letter-to-letter sequence: MacDonald, George comes before McDuff, James; Saint-Dennis, Joan appears before St. Lawrence, Susan. If the author’s name is unknown, use the first word in the title other than “A,” “An,” or “The” to alphabetize your list. For example:  
     “An Essay on Humanity” would be alphabetized under E.
- Cite the author’s name only in the first entry when you have two or more entries written by the same author. For the subsequent entries, type three hyphens and a period in place of the author’s name. The title then follows.
- See sample works cited pages for appropriate punctuation within each entry.
- Observe one-inch side, top, and bottom margins.
- Capitalize only the first letters of works cited.

### For more information

The OWL at Purdue University maintains the most useful website for MLA formatting and style. If you have a question about any part of the writing process and cannot find an answer in the Chantilly Style Manual, visit The OWL at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>.

## Works Cited

- Baker, Sheridan. *The Practical Stylist*. 5th ed. New York: Harper, 1981.
- Campbell, William Giles. *Form and Style in Thesis Writing*. Boston: Houghton, 1964.
- Elbow, Peter. *Writing with Power: Techniques for Mastering the Writing Process*. New York: Oxford UP, 1981.
- Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. New York: MIA, 1988.
- Heffernan, James A., and John E. Lincoln. *Writing: A College Handbook*. New York: Norton, 1982.
- How a Theme is Made*. N.p.: n.p., n.d.
- Roberts, Edgar V. *Thinking and Writing About Literature*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice, 1964.
- Stanford, Gene. *Steps to Better Writing*. New York: Holt, 1972.
- Strunk, William, Jr., and E. B. White. *The Elements of Style*. 3rd ed. New York: Macmillan, 1979.
- Williams, Barbara. *12 Steps to Better Exposition*. Columbus: Merrill, 1968.

# Index

- Appearance of manuscript ..... 18
- Beginnings ..... 9
  - ways to begin ..... 9
  - beginnings to avoid ..... 10
- Body paragraphs ..... 11
- Composing ..... 8
- Conclusion ..... 13
  - ways to conclude ..... 14
  - endings to avoid ..... 14
- Documentation ..... 5
  - research paper ..... 19
- Edited editions ..... 15
- Essay, purpose of ..... 7
- Format – see manuscript ..... 16
- Generating thesis statement ..... 8
- Integrity, writer’s ..... 4
- Internal documentation ..... 20
- Introduction ..... 9
- Manuscript form ..... 18
- Outlining ..... 6
  - topic outline ..... 7
- Parallelism ..... 9
- Paragraphs ..... 11
  - introduction ..... 9
  - concluding paragraphs ..... 11
  - supporting paragraphs ..... 10
  - whole paragraphs ..... 17
- Plagiarism ..... 4
- Poetry quotations ..... 21
- Prewriting ..... 6
- Prose quotations ..... 21
- Quotations ..... 21
- Research paper ..... 19
- Revising ..... 15
  - how to revise ..... 16
- Supporting paragraphs ..... 10
- Thesis statement ..... 8
  - revising thesis statement ..... 8
- Topic outline, see outline ..... 7
- Transitional words and phrases ..... 12
- Transitions ..... 11
- Ways to begin ..... 9
- Ways to conclude ..... 14
- Whole paragraphs ..... 12
- Writing process ..... 6
- Works cited ..... 24
  - general information ..... 16
  - sample entries ..... 23