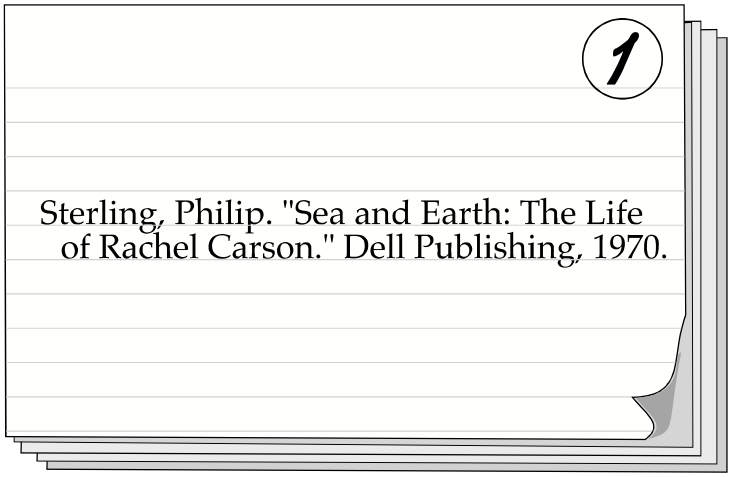
A good way to manage your information and avoid plagiarism is to set up a working **bibliography**. A *working bibliography* is a list or collection of all articles, books, and other sources checked for information or ideas while preparing a report or article. For each source—book, article, or other item—take a 3X5-inch card. In the left-hand corner, write the following: author's last name, author's first name, the title of the article, the book, or magazine from which it came, publishing date, and pages. In the right-hand corner, place a number. For your first source, use a number 1; for your second source, use a number 2, and so on.



This information will eventually go on your **Works Cited page**. The Works Cited page appears at the end of your report. It provides readers with the same information on the sources, cited or used, in your report. Readers will then be able to find these sources if they wish to check your information or read more on the topic.

The following is a list of the most commonly used entries on a Works Cited page. Use these forms in your working bibliography and then again on your Works Cited page. Note the order of the information and the indenting of the second (and third) line(s). If a form for one of your entries is not listed below, check the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. If this is not available, your teacher or librarian will direct you to another source containing this information.

The following lists ways to cite entries on your Works Cited page:

- A source that has one author:

Owen, Marna. *Health.* Paramus, NY: Globe Fearon Publisher, 1994.

- A source that has two or three authors:

Meeks, Linda, and Phillip Heit. *Health: A Wellness Approach*. Columbus, OH: Merrill, 1991.

- A source that has more than three authors:

Fodor, John T., et al. *Health for Living.* Irvine, CA: Laidlaw Brothers, Publishers, 1980.

- A source that is a single work from an anthology:

James, Henry. "The Middle Years." *The Riverside Anthology of Literature.* Douglas Hunt. 2d ed. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991. 96-110.

- A source that is a book without an author:

American Heart Association. *Exercise and Your Heart.* Dallas: American Heart Association, 1993.

- A source that is an article in a reference book:

"Mammals." Rare and Endangered Biota of Florida. 1992 ed.

- A source that has a signed article in a magazine:

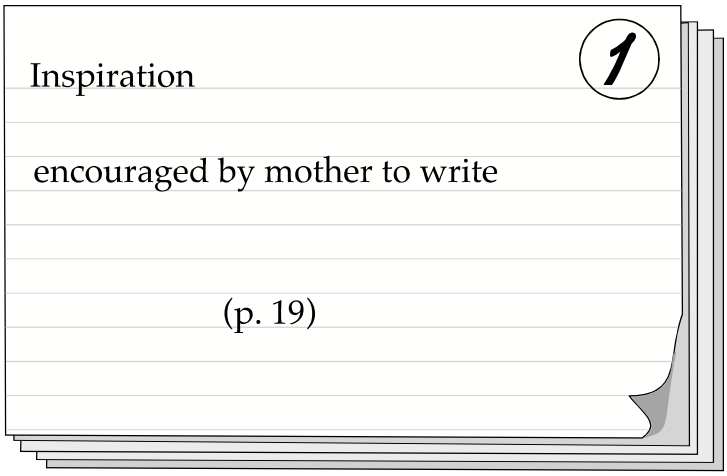
Gage, Nicholas "The Teacher Who Changed My Life." *Parade Magazine* 17 Dec. 1989: 22-23.

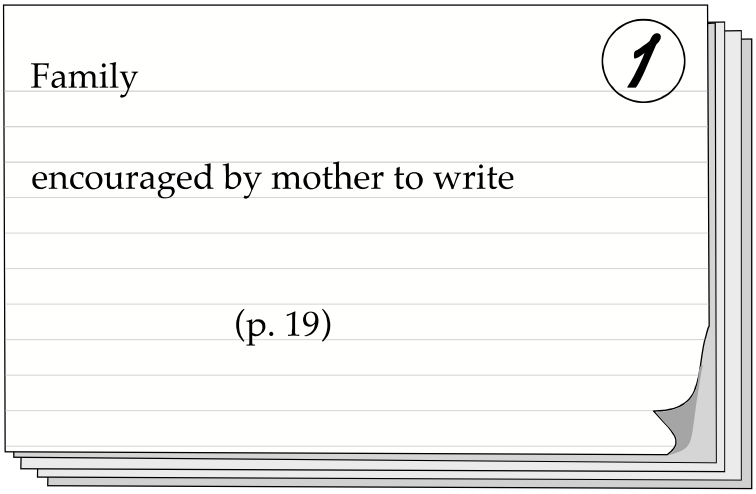
- A source that is a periodical on a computer information service:

Shipley, Lorraine. "Seeing Heroes in Everyday Life." *New York Times* 22 Dec. 1981: B2+. Rpt. in Heroes, Vol. 3. Ed. Joe Corso, Miami, FL: Hero Series, 1990.

(The information you need for this type of entry is provided by the computer service.)

Each time you borrow a piece of information or an idea from a book or article, place a number 1 or number 2, etc., in the right-hand corner of the notecard, sheet of paper, or computer entry. This number will tell you the source this bit of information came from in your research. Write the information on the notecard, followed by the page from which it came. In addition, in the upper left-hand corner, write a word or phrase that describes the information or idea you are recording. Sometimes a piece of information can be described in more than one way. Note that in the sample notecards below, the information falls under two headings: *Inspiration* and *Family*. In such a case, write the information on two cards and put one heading (for example *Inspiration*) on one card and the other heading (for example, *Family*) on the other card. The more ways you describe your information, the more possibilities you create for using the information.





Borrowing Information from Sources: Using the Summary, Paraphrase, and Direct Quotation

You will want to collect this information in ways that will be easy to use when it comes time to organize and write your report. The three forms you will use in this project are the **summary**, **paraphrase**, and **direct quotation**.

The Summary: Only the Main or Most Important Lines

When you summarize an article or book, you use your own words to capture the main idea(s). The *summary* boils down the most important ideas in the source into a concise description. Imagine you've just heard a long speech. As you leave the auditorium, a friend says: "Tell me what the speaker said as quickly as possible." Your brief response would be a *summary* of the speech.

This skill, like many in this unit, is one you have often used. Think back to the brief description of a story, television program, or movie you told to a friend. "Oh, the movie was about a young girl who surprises herself by showing tremendous courage as she saves her family from a killer hurricane." In just a few words you have captured the basic idea (or plot).

Many young writers make the mistake of using actual words or sentences from the source to compose their summary. Rather than gaining a full understanding of the ideas in the source, they end up simply remembering some of the actual words in the source. To avoid this problem, follow the steps below:

1. Preview the article as you would any reading assignment.

2. Read the article carefully but without stopping.

3. Read the article again, writing a single word or phrase in the margins to summarize each paragraph or section of the article. Do not use words from the article for your marks in the margins, except for special terms or key vocabulary.

4. Turn the article over and on a 3X5-inch notecard, in your research notebook, or in a computer file, write a summary using only fragments. (A *fragment* is an incomplete sentence.)

5. When you begin writing your first draft, you will then turn these fragments into complete sentences and thoughts composed wholly of your own language.

Remember: Even though you have used your own language to describe an idea or deliver information from a source, you have still *borrowed* the idea or source. Therefore, you must cite the source, or make it clear that you have taken the idea or information from someone else's work. (See pages 123-125.)

Below is an essay followed by a sample summary. The essay, "How the Strong Get rEVENge," is by George K. Richards. It appeared in the December 1995 issue of the magazine entitled, *Peace Watcher.* (*Peace Watcher* is a fictitious magazine, but the example is a demonstration of the proper way to cite sources in summary and paraphrase.)

How the Strong Get rEVENge

Recently, the news has been filled with accounts of people who have hurt or even killed one another during a feud. In nearly all of these cases, one or both parties felt that they had been wronged by the other. They felt the other had been disrespectful to them. At some point in our lives, almost all of us will experience this feeling. It is not a new feeling to the human race. It does seem, however, that our response to being treated rudely has been to react with violence. The cast of people who can incite our need for revenge seems limitless. It may ꜳ or siblings who make us feel small as they take out their daily frustrations on us. Or maybe it's a teacher. Almost certainly some of our peers will be cruel at times. It can be students from another school or even a stranger on a city bus. All of these people and experiences can wear on our self-esteem and make us feel badly about ourselves. Some would argue that the way to get revenge on those who hurt or insult us is to hurt them back. I am here to argue that there is a far sweeter kind of revenge that does not include violence.

Why Hurting Back Feels Good

There is something to be said about hurting those who have hurt us. There is something about being insulted or hurt by someone that leaves us with a white hot pain in our souls. Almost immediately the pain festers and turns to rage. The rage rushes through us like wildfire, burning up our good sense, our self-control, and leaving in its wake nothing but itself. Sometimes we feel that the only way to put that wildfire out is to strike back at the offender—be it a friend or enemy, family or stranger. No doubt there is a momentary satisfaction when you strike back in word or deed. You get to say those famous last words to yourself: "No one can treat *me* like that!"

This satisfaction, however, is short-lived. We may then find ourselves in one of two positions: (a) We strike back and find ourselves in trouble, having been caught violating a school policy or local or state law. Violence in almost every situation is illegal. When we respond with violence, we have helped the offender to keep on hurting us: (b) We get away with our revenge—but not really. We thought the offender was a loser for acting the way he did, and now we've imitated his behavior. He's tricked us into the old *monkey see, monkey do* response. You may be doing the hurting, but the offender is pulling your strings.

The Worthy Life Alternative

So what is this sweeter kind of revenge? It's simple and it is the cornerstone of most modern religions: Live a worthy life! To get even with someone who has done you harm, don't attempt to harm him or yourself. Do not get even with an unsupportive or unloving parent by committing crimes or doing drugs. Do not get even with cruel classmates by fighting or starting rumors. The best kind of revenge against people who have harmed you is to live a life of which you can be proud. Work hard at your interests and be as successful as you can in life. When you live a worthy life, you raise your self-esteem and end the hurt others have done to you. Best of all, you use revenge to improve yourself and to learn to take control of your own life.

Where Do You Want to Be in 20 Years?

Do some imagining right now to compare the two kinds of rEVENge available. In the first scenario, your peer group hurts you and you respond by acting out. You fight or lose interest in school and hobbies—somehow you believe that such acting out will show others that you are the boss and no one can show you disrespect. In 20 years, when your dreams are just memories, that nasty peer group is smugly smiling, as they recount how easy it was to steal your dreams. However, there's another scenario; try it on for size. That peer group sees you in 20 years, a successful and respected person, and they can see how you had something strong inside of you. You responded to their rudeness by raising your self-esteem and keeping focused on your future. Now I ask you: How much sweeter could revenge be than that?

Summary: Get to the Point

Richards, George K. "How the Strong Get rEVENge." *Peace Watcher* Dec. 1995: 34-36.

In "How the Strong Get rEVENge," George K. Richards argues that although some people use violence to strike back at those who humiliate or hurt them, a better way is to "live a worthy life." In addition, Richards stated that when you live a worthy life and achieve your potential, you show the offender that your strength of character could not be diminished by attacks from others.

Notice that this summary contains only two sentences and 67 words. The first sentence tells the main point of the essay—people should respond to rudeness by living "a worthy life." The second sentence explains the value of her main point—why the writer thinks that living such a life provides one with sweet revenge.

The Paraphrase: A Retelling in Your Own Words

The *paraphrase*, like a summary, includes the main idea presented in the source material. A paraphrase, however, is longer. Using your own language, your paraphrase retells *in detail* the information and ideas found in the source. Imagine, this time, that as you leave a speech your friend says: "I didn't follow the speaker's argument about why history is such an important subject to study. Would you retrace what she said for me? Oh, and would you do it in your own words, preferably little ones that I can understand?"

If you are able to paraphrase an article or a section of an article in your own words, you will know that you fully understood the contents. You are ready to use an article in your essay when you've transformed the language into your own.

Remember: Like a summary, if you use a paraphrase in your essay, you must cite the source. (See pages 123-125.)

Below is a sample of a paraphrase based on the essay, "How the Strong Get rEVENge," by George K. Richards, which is on pages 128-130.

Paraphrase: Put It in a Few of Your Own Words

Richards, George K. "How the Strong Get rEVENge." *Peace Watcher* Dec. 1995: 34-36.

In "How the Strong Get rEVENge," George K. Richards argues that everyone will face being shown disrespect by someone else. In too many cases, Richards claims, the experience led to violence, sometimes even resulting in permanent injury or death. He argues that there is a better way to seek revenge than using violence.

He does, however, understand that using violence on those we see as having wronged us can be satisfying. This satisfaction is short-lived and can have dramatic consequences. One can end up arrested, injured, or dead. Even if one gets away with violence, one has only imitated the behavior of the one who originally had shown disrespect. Sometimes we attempt to hurt this

person, who can be a parent, teacher, or peer, by doing badly in our school work, job, or in general. Such behavior, he explains, only lets the offender continue to hurt us.

The best response is to "live a worthy life" and achieve our potential. That, he claims, is the sweetest kind of revenge. We succeed and show the offender that our strength of character could not be diminished by attacks from others.

The paraphrase, at 202 words, is shorter than the original, which is 633 words. However, the paraphrase retells nearly all the major points and the subtopics that appear in the original. A good way to think of the relationship between this paraphrase and the original is to think of concentrated orange juice and regular orange juice. Like the paraphrase, the concentrated orange juice has everything that the regular orange juice has, except that all the water has been removed.

The Direct Quotation: Using an Actual Word, Phrase, or Sentence from a Source

In some instances you will want to use the actual words of the author. Sometimes a word, phrase, or sentence is so perfect in capturing an idea or thought that it cannot be replaced without losing much of the meaning. When you record something word for word, you are using a *direct quotation.*

Direct quotations must be put in quotation marks (" "). As with all borrowed material, you must cite the source from which you took the quotation. (See pages 123-125.)

As an example, imagine that you are using the essay "How the Strong Get rEVENge" for your own research paper on the causes of violence among youths. You think that the writer has perfectly captured in words the anger that drives some youths to lose their self-control and become violent. You find a good spot for this quotation and use it in this form:

> Why, when some youths feel they have been shown disrespect do they respond by doing things they otherwise would never consider? The writer Ginger K. Richards says that the pain of being shown disrespect often turns to rage, and then the "rage rushes through us like wildfire, burning up our good sense, our self-control, and leaving in its wake nothing but itself" (page number xx).

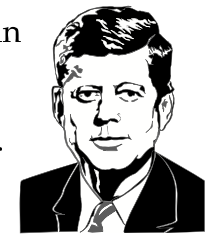
As another example, imagine that you have found a quotation about Rachel Carson from the famous scientist Hermann J. Muller in a book by Philip Sterling. The scientist praised Carson for calling attention to the "…ever accumulating multitudes of poisons which are permeating the human body." A quotation from Muller in Sterling's book would be a good testimonial to Carson because he is so well respected in science. In your description of Carson's major contributions, you find a good place for the quotation, and use it in this form:

> The famous scientist Hermann J. Muller praised Carson for calling attention to the "…ever accumulating multitudes of poisons which are permeating the human body" (Sterling 152).

The skillful writer uses only a few quotations. Too many quotations will overshadow your own voice, words, and ideas. So use quotations the way you would use a strong spice in cooking—just a pinch or two.

Structure Your Research Report: Using Your Questions to Organize Your Essay

Once you have collected the information and ideas you want, it is time to organize them. The formal essay generally has a structure. Like a building, it is built according to a design. A good way to develop a structure is to ask yourself: What is the main point of my essay? (In this project, the main point will be whether your subject meets the criteria for being considered a *hero*.) Then ask yourself: What information do my readers need first, second, third, etc., in order to understand my main point and be persuaded that it is valid?



Return to the criteria or the list of qualities that make a hero. (See pages 104-105.) Since you carefully planned your search during the prewriting stage, the structure of your essay has already been worked out.

Paragraph 1: Who was this person? (Readers first need to know about the subject—in this case the selected person. A *biography* of the person will provide this information. In addition, this biography should create interest in your readers. You will know your opening paragraph is successful if readers begin thinking: "This is interesting, tell me more!" This paragraph will also lead up to and include a thesis statement.)

Paragraph 2: Did this person have a mission or quest, and did he or she maintain a strong sense of right or wrong, even in the face of obstacles? (This is simply the first criterion for determining whether this person is a hero.)

Paragraph 3: Did this person demonstrate any special abilities, for example, insight, extreme intelligence, or physical courage? (This is simply the second criterion for determining whether this person is a hero.)

Paragraph 4: Has this person's status as a hero withstood the test of time? Do people today still consider him or her a hero? (This is simply the third criterion for determining whether this person is a hero.)

Paragraph 5: What can we learn from this person's history? In what ways would this person serve as a good role model? In what ways would this person not serve as a role model? (In the concluding paragraph, you will want to highlight and tie together the essay's important points. In addition, you will want to draw a final conclusion for readers.)

To begin organizing your information and ideas, separate your notecards into five piles corresponding with the five paragraphs on page 137. If you have used a word or phrase to describe each notecard, this job should be easy.

After separating your information into piles, you will want to examine each pile carefully. The information you have collected on the cards, along with the answers you have written on page 136, will support each **topic sentence** (often the first sentence) of the paragraph. Then order the information so it supports and explains your topic sentence.

In some cases, you will find the same information in more than one pile. (This will occur if you used more than one heading and notecard for the same piece of information.) At this point, then, you must decide which topic sentence the information is most closely related to in your report.

For example, take the question used to organize paragraph 2: "Did this person have a mission or quest, and did he or she maintain a strong sense of right or wrong, even in the face of obstacles?" In an essay written about Rachel Carson, the answer is "yes," and the topic sentence became the following:

> In spite of the many obstacles Rachel Carson faced, she continued trying to alert the public about threats to the environment.

The pieces of information, or notecards, are ordered in the following way to best support and explain the topic sentence:

> **Information #1:** corporations, farmers criticized Carson's book *Silent Spring*
>
> **Information #2:** Carson attacked use of DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane) pesticide; corporations said this research unreliable; DDT needed to grow enough food
>
> **Information #3:** attacked because she was a woman; women couldn't be trusted; stuck by her research
>
> **Information #4:** also overcame poor health: cancer, arthritis, ulcer
>
> **Information #5:** persevered; *Silent Spring* led to laws banning/restricting use of dangerous chemicals

Writing the First Draft: Turn Your Research into Sentences and Paragraphs

So far in this unit, you have selected a topic, kept a working bibliography of sources, made clear notes from your sources, and organized these notes into an outline. You are now ready to write a first draft.

When you write a first draft, you take your paragraph piles and mold them into sentences and paragraphs that make sense to your readers. Most first drafts are messy. Calling this effort a *first* draft implies that there will be at least a *second* draft. Knowing that you will have the opportunity to revise and improve this draft should help you to write freely. Don't sweat over each word in the first draft. Use the first draft to experiment. Try out new words. Move sentences around in paragraphs to see which order presents your information and ideas most logically. You will be able to polish individual words, rewrite sentences, and add missing details in the second draft.

The Thesis Statement: Making Your Claim

Your first task is to write a *thesis statement*. A thesis statement tells your readers what you believe about your topic. It is a claim: a statement the rest of your essay will support. Your topic, for example, may be Rachel Carson; however, Rachel Carson is not your thesis statement. Your thesis statement would make a claim or state an opinion about her: She is a hero; or she is not a hero according to the criteria being used to evaluate her. In this particular research paper, your thesis statement will tell your readers the answer you found to this question: "Is this person a hero?" A good way to determine this answer is by using the following chart:

Qualities of a Hero		
	YES	**NO**
1. Did this person see himself or herself as being on a quest or mission, and if so, did this person conduct himself or herself with **honor**, and with an internal sense of right and wrong while on this **quest**?		
2. Did this person have a special ability that set him or her apart from most people?		
3. Do we still see this person as a hero?		

If your selected person scores a YES on all three criteria above, then he or she is a complete hero. If he or she scores a YES on two criteria, then he or she has heroic qualities and is nearly a hero. If he or she scored only a single YES, then he or she is not a hero.

Rachel Carson scored a YES on all three criteria. A thesis statement for an essay on her could read: **"Because of the honorable way in which she pursued her goal, the insight she showed about the environment, and the positive lasting impression she left, Rachel Carson is indeed a complete hero."** Your thesis statement should be placed at the end of the first paragraph.

Note that this thesis statement begins with "Because"—the statement includes reasons why the writer claims Carson is a hero. Here is the thesis statement again, with each reason numbered: "Because of (1) the honorable way in which she pursued her goal, (2) the insight she showed about the environment, and (3) the positive lasting impression she left, Rachel Carson is indeed a complete hero." Note that each of the reasons given in support of Carson will become the topic of a body paragraph (paragraphs 2, 3, and 4). Paragraph 2 will show that she *pursued her goal or mission in an honorable way*; paragraph 3 will show that she *had a special kind of insight about the environment*; and paragraph 4 will show that she *is still considered a hero*. As you can see, a thesis statement not only states the main idea you will develop in your report, it may also indicate the organization pattern your report will follow. The thesis statement will also reflect your tone and point of view regarding the topic.

Paragraph 1: The Introduction

In the first sentence of your essay, tell readers something startling or interesting about this person. This will *hook* their interest and give them a reason to continue reading. Follow the opening sentence with a brief biography. The opening paragraph should lead smoothly to the thesis statement which will serve as the final sentence of this paragraph. (In the sample introductory paragraph below, the *hook* is italicized and the thesis statement is bolded.)

Example of introductory paragraph:

> *Although she grew up hundreds of miles from the ocean, Rachel Carson developed a lifelong interest in the sea*. She was born on May 27, 1907,

in western Pennsylvania and lived there until she left to attend college in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Even as a child she loved to write and was encouraged by her mother to do so (Wadsworth 19). After taking science courses in college, she became torn between becoming a writer and studying science (Sterling 58). Fortunately, she was eventually able to combine her two great loves and became a science writer who focused on marine topics. She used this ability to alert the world to the damage the use of chemicals was doing to the environment and particularly to the sea. Proving to the world that she was right about the hazardous use of chemicals became her mission. **Because of the honorable way in which she pursued her mission, the insight she showed about the environment, and the positive lasting impression she left, Rachel Carson is indeed a complete hero.**

Body Paragraphs: The Meat of the Essay

Each body paragraph should begin with a *topic sentence*. The topic sentence works in a paragraph the same way a thesis statement works in an essay. Whereas the thesis statement tells readers the main point or claim of the essay, the topic sentence conveys the main point or claim of the paragraph.

You will use the information and ideas you've researched, as well as your own thoughts, to complete the paragraph. The paragraph must persuade readers that the claim or opinion made in your topic sentence is valid. (In the sample paragraph on pages 142-143, the topic sentence is italicized.)

Remember: Like the thesis statement, the topic sentence makes a main point, claim, or states an opinion, not just a statement of fact.

For example, a statement that read, "Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* was published in 1962" is a statement of fact; it can be checked and verified. Therefore, it cannot be a topic sentence for it does not make a claim that the rest of the paragraph can support and discuss. A good way to think of a topic sentence (and a thesis statement) is to imagine yourself standing before your class. You begin by saying, "Today I will try to convince you that . . ." and then complete this sentence with a claim or an

opinion. You will then use the rest of your time (or paragraph) to persuade your classmates that your claim or opinion is valid.

Study the example of a body paragraph below. Look at the topic sentence: "In spite of the many obstacles Rachel Carson faced, she continued trying to alert the public about threats to the environment." Note that this statement is not a fact, unlike the date of Carson's birth or the years she attended college or the year she died. Instead, this statement is the writer's claim or opinion. In the rest of the paragraph, the writer must persuade readers that this claim or opinion is valid.

Use a test to see whether your topic sentence (or thesis statement) is a claim or a fact. Try to write a question about your topic sentence that cannot be answered by any information in the topic sentence. Consider, for example, the following sentence: "It takes 365 days for the earth to revolve around the sun." The only question we could ask of this sentence is, "How many days does it take the earth to revolve around the sun?" The answer, of course, is in the original sentence: 365 days. Therefore, this sentence cannot be a topic sentence.

Now consider the above topic sentence: "In spite of the many obstacles Rachel Carson faced, she continued trying to alert the public about threats to the environment." Here are some of the questions this sentence suggests: "What were the obstacles Carson faced?" "How did she continue trying to alert the public about threats to the environment?" "What were the threats to the environment?" As you read the body paragraph below, notice how each of these questions is answered in the paragraph. As you can see, the topic sentence prompts questions that the rest of paragraph must answer. (In the sample paragraph below, the topic sentence is italicized.)

Example of a body paragraph:

> *In spite of the many obstacles Rachel Carson faced, she continued trying to alert the public about threats to the environment.* After her book *Silent Spring* was published in 1962, many corporations which made chemicals and many farmers which used these chemicals began to denounce Carson's claims (Sterling 154). She focused much of her attack on DDT (dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane), a chemical used to kill damaging insects (Wadsworth 92). Chemical companies called her research unreliable, and farmers claimed that without these chemicals, they would not be able to grow enough crops to

feed the American people. Carson, however, stuck by her research. Carson also had to overcome another obstacle—her poor health. While working on *Silent Spring* she suffered from cancer, arthritis, and an ulcer (Kudlinski 51). However, nothing could stop her, and *Silent Spring* led to many laws banning or restricting the use of dangerous chemicals.

The Concluding Paragraph: Tie It All Together

The concluding paragraph ties the entire essay together. It should briefly summarize the body paragraphs. It should also add an insight that you, the writer, have based on your research and thinking. Notice that even the concluding paragraph has a topic sentence, which tells readers what the paragraph will discuss. (In the sample paragraph below, the topic sentence is italicized.)

Example of concluding paragraph:

We can learn much from Rachel Carson's life. She followed her love of writing and science, and found a way to do both rather than sacrifice one. When her discoveries about the harm chemicals were doing to the environment were attacked, she—a single woman facing powerful corporate men—would not back down. Through it all she acted with confidence, probably because she loved writing about nature and did careful research to back up her claims. Passion and knowledge were her weapons in the very important fight she waged. In the end, her work made a difference in the way we treat planet Earth.

Writing Your First Draft: Get Your Thoughts and Research on Paper

At this point you should have the opening sentence, thesis statement, and topic sentences. Now you are ready to begin drafting, or writing, your report. When you are finished writing this version of your report, you will have completed your first draft. To say that you have written a first draft implies that there will be a second draft. Knowing that you will have an opportunity to sharpen and revise your report should help relax you as you write. Write as good a first draft as you can, but don't sweat over every single word or even whole sentences.

Developing the Paragraph: Lead with a Topic Sentence, Follow with Details

As you have learned, the topic sentence tells readers the main idea or the claim you are going to support in a particular paragraph. Next, your ideas or claims need to be supported with relevant evidence—facts, anecdotes, and statistics—from reliable sources. The rest of the paragraph, then, must have enough relevant information or reasons to persuade readers that your claim is valid or believable. The sentences that deliver this support are called *detail sentences*. Many paragraphs also have a concluding sentence that summarizes the paragraph by restating the central idea. The topic sentence and the concluding sentence are the most general statements in a paragraph.

There are many different ways to provide details in a paragraph. The categories below are some of the most common and effective ways of developing detail sentences.

1. **Definitions.** Use a definition to define a word, a process, or a concept.

   Example: A decade means 10 years.

2. **Descriptions.** Use a description to explain what something looks like, feels like, sounds like, tastes like, etc.

   Example: The rotting fish was mottled and covered with algae.

3. **Examples.** Use an example to give readers a specific instance.

   Example: A ball tossed into the air shows the force of gravity.

4. **Facts.** Use a fact to support an opinion or claim you are making.

   Example: The timer on the security camera shows that they got home before 8:00 p.m.

5. **Statistics (numbers or percentages).** Use statistics to prove what you are claiming is correct.

   Example: Twenty percent of the class got an "A" on the test.

6. **Reasons or Causes.** Use a reason to justify a statement.

   Example: Driving under the influence of alcohol can cause accidents.

Sometimes writers have a hard time including enough details to support a main idea. If this happens to you, check the list above for ideas on the kind of details you could add to your paragraph.

Remember: Readers need clear and accurate details to understand what you have written.

Study the example below of a paragraph that has a topic sentence followed by detail sentences. The topic sentence is italicized.

> *Until about 150 years ago, most parents thought of and treated their children as younger adults.* Many children worked right along side of their parents as soon as they were old enough. If the father was a cobbler, his children most likely helped to make and fix shoes. Parents who worked in factories thought themselves lucky if they could get their children jobs working right along side of them. Children did not have lengthy childhoods, as we might imagine.

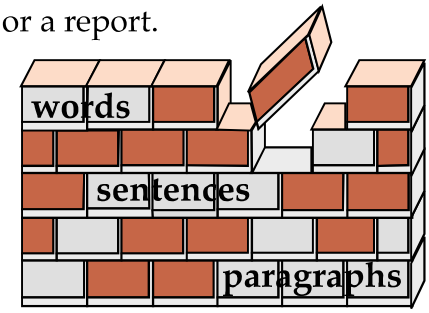
Notice that the *topic sentence* clearly states the main idea of the paragraph. It helps readers prepare for what follows: Readers expect that the sentences that follow, *the detail sentences*, will discuss, explain, and support how children were treated as "younger adults." Read the paragraph again, and note how each detail sentence refers to the topic sentence.

Structuring Your Paragraph: The Five-Sentence Design

A paragraph can have a wide number of sentences. Paragraphs in very learned texts may run as many as 20 or even 30 sentences. At this point in your writing career, try to compose paragraphs of about five sentences. In this number of sentences, you can present a topic sentence with enough details of support and a concluding sentence.

The Well-Built Paragraph: Using Unity and Coherence

There are many building blocks in an essay or a report. Words, of course, are the smallest building blocks, then sentences, and then paragraphs. If you were to think of building a house, the words would be the boards, the sentences would be the floors, walls, and ceilings, and the paragraphs would be the rooms. Paragraphs, then, have to be designed so that all the boards, floors, walls, and ceilings fit together. If they don't fit together, then the room will not offer much use or value. Similarly, if the words and sentences do not fit together, the paragraph will not be very readable. It will not be a paragraph that gives your readers information and ideas *in a way* that they can grasp and use. Well-written paragraphs have both *unity* and *coherence*.



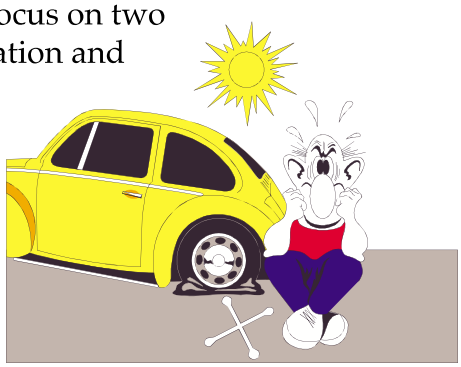
Unity: When Every Sentence Points to the Main Idea of the Paragraph

A paragraph, as you know, is a group of sentences that all discuss and support a single idea or claim. When all of the sentences in a paragraph discuss, illustrate, or otherwise develop the main idea, the paragraph has unity. All of the sentences are unified or work together. A good test for every paragraph you write is to take each sentence and ask: "Does this sentence focus on the topic sentence or main idea?" If it does, then it adds to the unity of the paragraph. If it does not, then it should be revised to do so. If you discover that the content of the sentence is not directly focused on the main idea, then delete it.

A good way to think about unity is to imagine watching an exciting movie. What if, in the midst of the most dramatic scene, when the heroine is hanging by a fingernail from the Statue of Liberty, the movie suddenly showed the streets below and then focused on an unusual car. What if the movie followed the car for a few blocks and then returned to the dangling heroine? The effect of the scene would be lost. Your interest would be lessened. So it is when we read a paragraph that is focused on a subject for three or four sentences and then suddenly shifts to a different subject or focus. When this happens, we also begin to lose our trust in the writer. We may think that this writer is not very competent, and we may even wonder if we can trust the writer's research.

Coherence: Connecting Sentences to One Another

A paragraph is coherent when one sentence leads naturally and smoothly into the next sentence. Your readers should be able to see how a point or piece of information made in one sentence relates to a point or piece of information in the next sentence, and so on. There are many different ways to achieve coherence; this unit will focus on two of them. One of these is to present information and points in an orderly way. If you were to instruct someone in fixing a flat tire, you would not tell them to remove the flat tire before you told them to loosen the lug nuts and jack-up the car. Therefore, think of ordering your sentences so that your readers can follow your discussion or argument.



Another way to create coherence is to use **transitions**. A *transition* is a word or phrase that bridges or links one sentence to another. (Transitions can also be used to link one part of a sentence to another, one paragraph to another, or even an entire section of an essay to another section.) Transitions help the ideas and information in a paragraph fit together. If sentences were train cars, transitions would be the couplers between them. There are many different ways to organize a paragraph and many different transitional words and phrases that can link sentences. The following are some of the methods used to arrange sentences and produce links in a paragraph:

Chronological: If the paragraph is describing events, arrange them in the order in which they happened.

> *The day went from bad to worse.* I was awakened when a baby rattlesnake shook his rattle in my face. *Then* the toaster burst into flames, and turned breakfast into crumbs. *After* that flaming experience, I rushed to my car only to find four flat tires and a dead battery. *Finally*, I went back inside, got in bed, and pulled the covers over my head.

Note that in the above paragraph ordered according to time, the transitions used to smoothly move from one sentence to another are *Then*, *After*, and *Finally*. Without transitions to link, order, and make clear the relationship between sentences, your paragraph will read like a bunch of

sentences tacked together. Even the best content will read poorly without transitions to help readers understand.

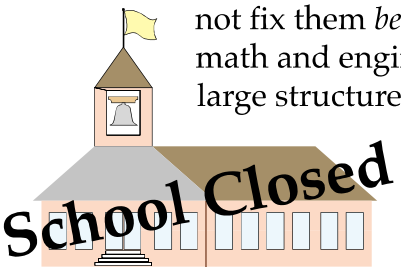
Examples and Reasons: If the topic sentence makes a general claim, support it with examples or reasons.

> *Although watching sports on television has become one of the most popular hobbies in the United States, most people do not know how to get the most out of their sports viewing.* Most people watch only the ball, whether they are watching a basketball, baseball, volleyball, or any other sport in which a ball is used. *Consequently*, most viewers have no idea about what happens away from the ball during the action. Do you know, *for example*, what offensive basketball players do when they don't have the ball? *Similarly*, in baseball, when a ball is relayed from an outfielder to an infielder, have you ever watched to see how the other infielders position themselves to back up the throw and prepare themselves for a play at one of the bases? If you haven't, then you're only watching half the game!

Note that in this paragraph that uses examples and reasons to support the topic sentence, the transitions "Consequently," "for example," and "Similarly" clearly tell us how the sentence relates to the one before it. The sentence that begins with *consequently* will tell the *effect* of a cause that has previously been described. The transitional word *similarly* will give us a reason or example that is *like* the one just presented.

Cause and Effect: If the topic sentence presents a cause, the rest of the paragraph will describe its effects.

> *One day I woke up to find all the schools closed*. *As a result*, kids all over the country spent the day bored with nothing to do but get into trouble. They never learned or they forgot how to read. *Consequently*, books began to disappear because no one knew what to do with them. When bridges began to fall, they could not fix them *because* they did not know how to do the math and engineering it takes to understand and erect a large structure. *Because* they had no schools, kids never grew up and education simply became something that died in the past.



Note that in this paragraph showing the effects of schools closing, the transitions help readers follow a list of cause and effects. The transitions are *As a result*, *Consequently*, *because*, and *Because*. Take out these transitions and the paragraph becomes a list the reader must try to understand.

There are many possible ways to move smoothly from one sentence to another and link one sentence to another. The following is a partial list of transitions:

- To show an additional example, item, or idea: *again*, *also*, *besides*, *even more important*, *furthermore*.

  Example: I finally learned how to wait my turn in a discussion. *Even more important*, I finally learned how to listen.

- To show a contrast between two things: *although*, *but*, *however*, *in contrast*, *nevertheless*, *yet*.

  Example: The television has brought faraway places into our living room and educated us about many exotic places. *However*, the television has also brought us many worthless shows that waste our time with juvenile humor.

- To show an example: *for example*, *for instance*, *in fact*, *to illustrate*.

  Example: Education beyond high school can do more than just increase your knowledge and skills. *For example,* in higher education you may meet people from distant places with fascinating pasts and unusual ideas.

Documenting Your Sources: Give Credit Where Credit Is Due

You will be using sources to help support your thesis statement and topic sentences. The content you take from these sources is not your own—it belongs to the person who wrote it. Therefore, you must give credit to the source. Writers give credit to their sources in two ways. First you give credit to the source in the body or the text of your paper. The body or the text of your paper includes all the pages that contain your writing about your topic. The documentation you provide in the body of your paper is called ***in-text citations***. The name, in-text citation, describes what you are doing: providing citations or documentation for any borrowed material *in the text* of your essay.

Second, you give a more detailed description of your sources after the body or text of your paper. This list of sources is called the *Works Cited page*. Both the documentation you do in the body of your paper and on the Works Cited page have a specific form.

In-Text Citations: Identifying the Source of Specific Information and Ideas

"The citation identifies the source, just as a name card would identify you...."

When you use in-text citations, you identify the source of a piece of information, an idea, or a quotation at the end of the sentences or passage. The citation identifies the source, just as a name card would identify you to a roomful of strangers.

The form you will use for in-text citations and your Works Cited page in this essay is from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. The MLA style for citing electronic resources is similar to that for nonelectronic resources. Please refer to pages 18-20 in "Unit 1: Online Technology—Using the World Wide Web." There are also other forms available. Always ask your teacher which form you should use for a specific assignment.

The citation, or source of a piece of information or of an idea, is placed at the end of the sentence *but before the final punctuation*. The basic form includes the author's name and the page number from which the information was taken. The following is a partial list of the in-text citations most commonly used in a paper:

- If the author is named in the sentence, include only the page number:

In his biography of Rachel Carson, Philip Sterling wrote that for 20 years, "Rachel had made the most of her opportunities to study the sea, not only in print but directly with her own senses" (104).

- If the author is not named in the sentence, include the author's last name and the page number:

One biographer wrote that for 20 years, "Rachel had made the most of her opportunities to study the sea, not only in print but directly with her own senses" (Sterling 104).

- If the source was written by two or three authors, include all authors' names and the page number:

The middle class can be defined as a "broad but not undifferentiated category which includes those who have certain attitudes, aspirations, and expectations toward status mobility, and who shape their actions accordingly" (Schneider and Smith 19).

- If the source was written by more than three authors, include only the first author's name and the words *et al.*:

One action that government could take to revitalize social ecology would be to reduce the "punishments of failure and rewards of success" (Jencks et al. 8).

- If the source lists no author, include the name of the text and the page number:

In her controversial book *Silent Spring* (1962), she attacked the irresponsible use of insecticides. She warned that insecticides upset the balance of nature by destroying the food supply of birds and fish (*World Book Encyclopedia* 187).

- If you are using more than one source by the same author, include the author's last name followed by a comma, the name of the source, and the page number:

"If I had influence with the good fairy who is supposed to preside over all children, I should ask that her gift to each child in the world be a sense of wonder so indestructible that it would last throughout life" (Carson, *A Sense of Wonder* 42).

Now return to your draft. Insert all of the in-text citations. This should be a fairly easy process. Just use your notecards, notebook, or computer files to identify the source of each piece of information or idea. Then document your source.

The Works Cited Page: Providing Detailed Information on All Sources Cited in the Text

The Works Cited page comes at the end of your essay. It lists all of the works you have cited in your essay. Do not include any sources you did *not* cite in the essay. Please refer to pages 18-20 in "Unit 1: Online Technology—Using the World Wide Web" for the MLA style for citations of electronic references.

Take your notecards that contain bibliographical information. (Review pages 123-125 that guide you through developing a "working bibliography" and the list for entries on a "Works Cited page.") Circle the first word of the entry. The first word will either be the author's last name, or if there is no author listed, the first word of the title. If the title begins with an article (*A*, *An*, or *The*), circle the second word. Then alphabetize your notecards. If you have more than one entry that begin with the same letter, alphabetize according to the first and second letter. For example, *Ramirez* would go above *Reese*. Once you've ordered these notecards, enter them on the *Works Cited* page using the following guidelines:

- Type the page number in the upper right-hand corner, one-half inch from the top of the page.
- Center the title *Works Cited* one inch from the top.
- Double-space before the first entry.
- Align each entry with left margin. If the entry needs more than one line, indent additional lines five spaces.
- Double-space each entry.
- Double-space between entries.