



Common Writing Terms and Concepts Defined

Writing Process

Writing prompt: Your professor's instructions for your writing assignment.

Brainstorming: Exercises and techniques that help you find and organize ideas, arguments, and theses for a paper. To see some examples, check out the Writing Center's handout on Brainstorming techniques.

Freewriting: A form of brainstorming where you write without stopping for a period of time.

Draft: The initial version of a paper before revisions and proofreading.

Feedback: Comments on your paper that praises or provides comments for improving your draft.

Revising: Correcting or making changes to the paper's thesis, organization, argument or evidence.

Proofreading: Correcting the sentence structure, spelling, and other grammar in the paper. This step comes after revising the paper.

Peer Review Workshop: Students get into pairs or groups to write feedback and to talk about improving the paper.

Rubric: A scoring guide that a teacher uses to grade your paper. It usually includes a description of what an excellent, good, or poor score may look like. (e.g. have a clear thesis statement, address the audience appropriately)

Elements of a Paper

Introduction: The first paragraph or section of your paper; it gives important background about the topic. It also includes the thesis statement.

Thesis Statement: A clear statement of the main argument in your paper. It usually appears at the end of the introduction.

Body paragraph: A paragraph in the paper that is neither the introduction nor the conclusion. In an argumentative paper, a body paragraph supports the thesis statement. It contains topic sentences, evidence, and analysis. (See below)

Topic Sentence: A clear statement of the main idea you want a paragraph to convey. It usually comes at the beginning of the paragraph.

Evidence: Any material (e.g.: data or expert sources) that supports or helps prove your thesis.

Source: People or publications that provide evidence to support your thesis. Examples may include journal articles, books, online websites, videos, and people you interview. You must cite your sources when you use them in your paper.

Analysis: When writers provide analysis, they explain how their evidence connects to their thesis.

Counterargument: An argument that disagrees with your position in the paper. You should acknowledge counterarguments, and either accept, accommodate or refute it.

Conclusion: The last paragraph or section in an essay; it restates the thesis and the evidence that supports it. It sometimes also explains the thesis's importance outside of a class.

Genres of Writing

Persuasive Essay or Argumentative Essay: A paper that tries to convince a reader that an idea is better than another idea. The paper may try to tell its reader to take action for this idea. Some persuasive essays may use sources and others may not.

Research Paper: An essay that analyzes a number of sources within a field, creating an argument or interpretation of the information within the sources.

Citations/References

These are concepts that relate to the use of sources in a paper.

Source: People or publications that provide evidence to support your thesis. Some examples are journal articles, books, online websites, videos, and people you interview.

In-text Citation: When you reference (or “cite”) a source in the body of your paper, that reference is an in-text citation. To see sample in-text citations, refer to MLA, APA, or Chicago style manuals or Purdue OWL.

Signal phrase: A phrase that leads into a quotation or paraphrase. A signal phrase usually includes the author’s name. Refer to MLA, APA or Chicago style Purdue OWL to see how to cite sentences with signal phrases
(Possibly put examples here)

Quoting: The use of someone’s words exactly as they wrote them. Quoting requires quotation marks **and** an in-text citation.

Paraphrasing: Using different words and sentences to summarize a source’s main idea or argument. Paraphrasing requires an in-text citation.

Bibliography: Located at the end of the paper, it contains a list of all sources cited in the paper. (Also called: Works Cited or References page)

Bibliographic citation: Each source used in the paper is listed in the bibliography. Each source entry is called the bibliographic citation.

Annotated Bibliography: A list of sources you plan to use in a paper. Each source in the list is accompanied by a short summary (“annotation”) of that source, and how it relates to your paper. The annotation may also evaluate the source, its accuracy and quality.

Summary: a brief account of a source’s main points.

Plagiarism: Occurs when the writer uses the ideas or words of another person or publication or other source without crediting, acknowledging or citing that person, publication, or other source.

Patchwriting: is considered a form of plagiarism and you want to avoid this. It is when someone writes passages that are not copied word by word, but have still been borrowed.

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