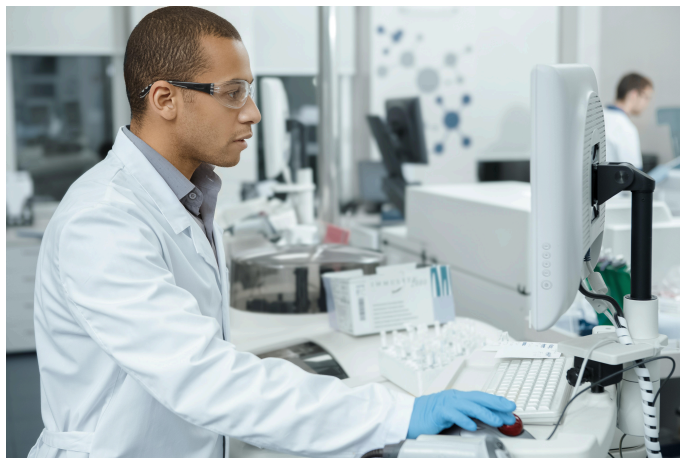


Research and Presentation Introduction

Research and Presentation: Introduction



Source: Nestor Rizhniak. Shutterstock

Spark

Today, you will begin an intensive focus on the research process, which will culminate in your writing and presenting a research paper. The idea of compiling, evaluating, and presenting research on a particular topic might sound a bit daunting, but consider this: you likely already have the prerequisites down. You do research every day when you turn to your phone or tablet or hop on the internet to look up things you want to know. Furthermore, you likely know what to look for and have a pretty good idea of where to look, too. If you're an avid camper, for example, and you want to know about the best campsites in an area, you know where to look for information and can distinguish helpful sources from questionable ones. You wouldn't look for reviews of campsites written by people who staff them, for example—you'd search for reviews written by the customers.

Academic research, however, requires that you go beyond simply finding information; instead, you must synthesize and evaluate key ideas in order to acquire a new understanding of the topic. Consider the difference between finding a campsite and conducting scientific research. The former calls for you to find information and choose a site that best meets your needs. The latter, however, requires that the researcher carefully analyze and evaluate their findings so that they can draw conclusions and interpret a scientific topic in a way that they—or anyone else—may have not previously considered.

Activity

Consider someone who does academic research as part of their job or daily life, whether it's someone you know or a hypothetical example. Then, complete the concept web by briefly describing the kind of research the person does in the center square and writing characteristics important to their research in the surrounding squares.

Learning Coach Guide

This section will help you guide students through their learning.

[View Learning Coach Guide](#)

[Hide Learning Coach Guide](#)

Spark

1. In the unit your student will begin today, they will be asked to compile research in order to respond to a question about a particular topic. They will evaluate their research and submit their findings in both written and presentation form. As part of this process, your student will select and read a text that could potentially be a source for their research. As they read and respond to the text and to others they compile during the research process, they will be asked to analyze and evaluate complex ideas and write about their observations and conclusions.
2. Have your student read the first paragraph and explain that learning how to find information is one of the most useful skills they can master. They don't have to know all the answers, but if they have good research skills, they can find the answers to just about anything. Knowing how to find answers gives them a tremendous amount of power.

3. Have your student read the next paragraph and discuss the difference between the everyday research described in the previous paragraph and the kind of academic research this paragraph describes. Confirm with them that as part of this unit, they will be conducting academic research for a specific purpose: to gain a unique understanding about a particular event and the questions it provokes. Discuss how the process of research might differ from the camping example presented previously.

Research and Presentation: Introduction

The Basics of Research

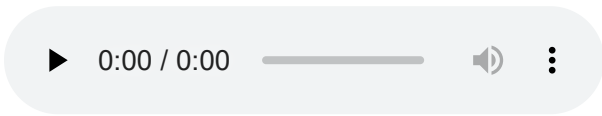
Have you ever heard the expression “Consider the source”? It’s a common admonition that has seeped into our everyday speech, and it suggests that the information from a particular source could potentially be unreliable. That’s important to remember when you’re doing online research, because—remember—it’s all out there, the information and misinformation. Anyone can post anything. So when you’re thinking about what information to read, also think about *who* produced it, *when* they produced it, and *why* they produced it.

Consider potential bias in a source, too. Any information produced by an organization that promotes a social cause or political agenda might be slanted to support their views, for example, and thus organizations that embrace opposite views could quite likely publish contradictory “facts.”

When you begin to research a topic, try to pinpoint exactly what you want to learn about it. That’s important to do before you begin writing, but the earlier in the research process you find a focus, the more efficient you can be in pinpointing relevant sources and retracting relevant information.

To learn how to target research, listen to this conversation between a reference librarian and a student beginning to compile research about a topic.

Audio: Target Research



Target Research Transcript

The Basics of Presentation



Source: fizkes. Shutterstock

As you're gathering and interpreting information, remember that you're going to have to present your findings at some point—in writing, orally, or (in the case of the portfolio assignment in this unit) both ways. Moreover, you're going to have to do so in a way that's logical to both you and a particular audience.

Careful researchers recognize the value of organization, but they don't necessarily agree on the best way to do it. The way we organize information is unique to the way we think. Some researchers use an outline to structure their research, while others use note cards; you might have a completely different way of linking facts and ideas. Recognizing what works for you is one of the most important things you can do now to prepare yourself for success in any academic or career path you take after high school. Learn how you learn and how you organize information to help you make sense of it.

Activity

Consider how you organize information to make sense of it, as well as what kinds of things you do to help you remember the information you learn. Then, create a list of study and research tips that suit your learning and organization style and that you can refer to as you are researching and writing.

Learning Coach Guide

This section will help you guide students through their learning.

[View Learning Coach Guide](#)

[Hide Learning Coach Guide](#)

The Basics of Research

- 1.** Have your student read the first three paragraphs and discuss their experience doing online research. Ask: Do you primarily use an online search engine to locate information? Or do you locate information in other ways? Discuss each option and its pros and cons.
- 2.** Discuss the services at your local library and make sure your student has a library card. Go to the library's home page and spend some time reviewing the available services and resources.
- 3.** Direct your student to listen to the podcast by stressing the importance of gaining background information. Not only will it aid in focusing their research, but it will help them get a handle on the topic so they can write about it with clarity. When they're explaining a complex topic, such as how a scientific process works, for example, they will have to know enough about it to explain it clearly to someone who knows no background information about the topic at all.
- 4.** Remind your student that "mining" a text for source material requires them to examine it a little more thoroughly than if they were simply reading it for information. They will have to extract

the information they plan to use and note the source and page where they got it. Explain that to support the ideas they write about, they will want to include details such as examples, quotations, statistics, and facts, and they will have to know exactly where they got those details.

The Basics of Presentation

- 1.** Have your student read this section and discuss the concept of “personalizing” learning. Share your own strategies for how you best learn and organize materials and compare them to your student’s.
- 2.** Have your student complete the activity by preparing a list of tips that will benefit them as they move forward with the research process. Remind them that they can add to their list as they move forward with the unit.

Previewing the Unit Text

Select a Text

In addition to learning more about the processes of research and presentation, you will be compiling, writing, and presenting your own research focused on an event and the questions it provokes. The nonfiction text you select to read over the course of this unit will be an important part of that process. Ideally, you will use the text as a source for your research; in addition, keep in mind that the reading you do outside your studies can spark ideas for ways to focus and hone your topic.

As you consider the titles available to you, be sure to examine them for appropriateness to your topic as well as for clarity of expression. Keep the following strategies in mind:

- What kind of information does the text contain, and how might it support a topic related to an event and the questions it provokes? How will the information it contains help you explain your ideas?
- How focused is the text? Ideally, a text you select as a potential source should follow the “Goldilocks” rule: Not too broad, not too specific, but just the right amount of focus.
- How clearly and engagingly is the information conveyed? When you enjoy what you’re reading, you absorb the information much easier than if you’re struggling to get through it. Consider what you hope to gain from reading the text and whether it will promote an informative and pleasant reading experience.

Pace and Prepare Yourself

You will have approximately eight days (not counting weekends) to read your self-selected text. Consider your schedule, and pace yourself so you can read at a comfortable pace.

Here's one way you might set up a rough reading schedule:

- Examine your text and determine the number of chapters or pages it contains.
- Divide that number by the number of days you have available to complete the book. Remember to consider your schedule and any other commitments you might have so can allot a sufficient amount of time to get your reading done without feeling stressed.
- Allow for flexibility. If you're having trouble focusing one day for one reason or another, give yourself a break and return to your reading later. Also, keep in mind that on some days you might be a lot more interested in the text than on other days, or you might find a lot more information that's relevant to your research. On those days, you might get on a roll and want to read a lot longer than planned.

As you read the text, think about some key questions as you read and make notes in your Reading Log as appropriate. After you finish each day's reading, go through the following checklist:

- What did I learn from my reading that I can use for my research and writing?
- How did the information I learned help me hone or clarify my research plan? How, if at all, did it suggest a way to better focus the topic?
- Did the information I've learned spark questions I want to answer? How might the information I've collected be expanded on to promote clarity?
- Were source materials cited for any facts I extracted, and might those sources be useful to me as well?
- Have I gleaned all the information I can use from this section?
- Have I documented everything I plan to use?

After you collect details from the text, think about how they fit into the scope of your research. Consider adding these notes to your outline or modifying whatever structure

you used to organize your ideas. If you create some kind of structure for your research paper, you can continue to add details as you collect them. That often makes it easy to write about them later.

Begin Reading

Consult the reading schedule you created and begin reading your selected text. Use the questions above to examine the first day's reading and note in your Reading Log information that you plan to use in your writing, making sure you note the page where you got each fact. Remember that as you proceed, you will have daily opportunities to glean information from the text and add details to your log.

Reading Log

Learning Coach Guide

This section will help you guide students through their learning.

[View Learning Coach Guide](#)
[Hide Learning Coach Guide](#)

Select a Text

1. Review that, as part of the unit, your student will complete a portfolio by researching, writing, and presenting a paper focused on a particular event and the questions the event provokes. Note that one criterion for choosing a nonfiction text to read over the course of the unit should be the text's appropriateness for use as a research source. Point out the suggestions for selecting a text and discuss them as needed.
2. Allow your student sufficient time to examine the available nonfiction text selections and encourage them to choose a text that is appropriate for their topic and that seems clear and informative.

Pace and Prepare Yourself

1. Discuss the information in this section with your student. Allow them sufficient time to create their schedule.
2. Review the bulleted questions with your student. Explain that as they read and utilize their selected text as source material, these questions will help them build their knowledge of research and presentation so that they can apply it to their own written work.

Begin Reading

1. Guide your student into reading the first day's text as indicated in the reading schedule. Make sure that they have their Reading Log available for notetaking. Discuss with your student the information they recorded in their log, how they recorded it, and how they plan to use it to present their ideas in their work.
2. Guide your student through the process of mining a source for details using the questions in the "Pace and Prepare Yourself" section. Remind them that this is the procedure they will follow as they read and examine the source texts they will use for their

writing, and that you will be there to help them through the procedure as needed.

23/24 Honors English 11 B - Research and Presentation

Research and Presentation Reading Day

Reading Day

Please use today's lesson to read from the designated text for this unit. Use your reading log to take notes based on the guidance in the unit introduction reading preview. Refer to the pacing guide to plan your reading time during the rest of the unit.

Topic

Objective and Key Word

Objective

In this section, you will form a research question by determining a topic.

Key Words

- **formal inquiry** – standardized research with a specific goal in mind
 - **informal inquiry** – research aimed at finding context for a topic
 - **research question** – an inquiry that can be answered through study and investigation
-

Topic

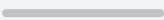


People do research in all areas of life. They conduct informal inquiries when they ask their friends what restaurants are worth visiting or which video games are worth playing. They look at sources on the internet to decide whether to see a movie or to determine which air conditioner to buy. The term *research* also encompasses learning about an academic topic, such as the history of railroads in the United States, the American Revolution, or the process of manufacturing steel. There are two types of research you will learn about: an informal inquiry and a formal inquiry. An informal inquiry can be used to help writers learn about the context surrounding their topic. A **formal inquiry** requires a standardized and in-depth research process, and there is usually a specific goal in mind for that research process.

In this lesson, you'll be thinking about how writers choose a topic and how they develop a research question, or a question that can be answered by using books and internet sources to find out about a subject. Writers can use their research questions to establish a clear thesis, or a statement that summarizes the writer's main point about their topic. This type of detailed research is called a formal inquiry.

Choosing a Topic

Choosing a topic is the first stage of doing research. Listen to the podcast to learn how to choose a topic:

Audio: All About the Arctic

▶ 0:00 / 0:00   

All About the Arctic Transcript

Some other strategies that can help writers choose a topic include brainstorming or writing down everything one knows about a particular area of study, and doing some background research to see what direction to go in when writing. And of course, as you heard in the podcast, it helps if the topic is something the writer is already familiar with—and if it's one that interests them.

Formulating a Research Question

Once the writer has chosen a manageable topic for their formal inquiry, the next step is to develop a research question, or a question that helps focus the research. The writer

will try to answer this question in the paper or presentation. Like choosing the topic, writers don't want to choose a research question that's too broad. Perhaps more importantly, though, they don't want to choose a research question that's too narrow. If a writer can find the answer to the question in a brief search of ten or fifteen minutes, it's too narrow.



Source: Incredible Arctic. Shutterstock

Here are some research questions relating to the Arctic that are not broad enough:

- At what point in history did Europeans and Americans start trying to travel to the North Pole?
- About how many polar bears remain in the Arctic?
- Is the Arctic gradually getting warmer?

These may be fine questions for an informal inquiry, but they are not effective *research* questions for a formal inquiry. You'll notice that all of these are factual questions which can be answered in just a few words. In general, writers will need to avoid this kind of question when they're doing formal inquiries. Questions that can be answered *yes* or *no*, such as the third example question above, just don't provide enough interest to make them worth pursuing for the writer. The same is true of questions that can be answered with dates, like the first example above, or numbers, such as the second example. A better example of an effective research question, for both an informal and

formal inquiry, would be a question that uses *how*, *what*, or *why* and requires more than a one-word answer.

Let's take a look at how these questions might be broadened to make them more appropriate. Instead of asking when Americans and Europeans started traveling to the North Pole, a writer might ask: *What is the history of Arctic exploration by Americans and Europeans?* That would be a more interesting research question and could lead the writer in several different directions in a formal inquiry. Similarly, instead of simply asking how many polar bears are left in the wild, a more appropriate research question for a formal inquiry might be: *What is happening to the polar bear population in the Arctic, and why?* And instead of the yes/no question about temperatures, a more effective research question might be: *How are climate changes affecting the Arctic?*

The advantage of an effective research question is that it guides and informs the writer's research. That might be a quick informal inquiry, such as *What is the Arctic environment like?*, or it might be a more lengthy formal inquiry, such as the one above *How are climate changes affecting the Arctic?* As writers begin to answer their research questions, they discard information that is not relevant to their formal inquiry and instead focus on the information that *is* relevant.

Writers can also use their research questions to help them establish a clear thesis before they begin writing. A thesis is a statement that summarizes the writer's main point about their topic. This statement can act as the answer to a formal inquiry research question. By establishing a clear thesis, the writer can better organize their research in a way that highlights important information related to their topic.

Question

What is a potential risk of not having an effective research question for a formal inquiry?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The question will be answerable too quickly and therefore would be better for an informal inquiry than a formal inquiry.

Check-In

Consider what you have learned about formulating research questions as you answer these questions.

Question 1

Write an example of a research question for an informal inquiry and an example of a research question for a formal inquiry. Explain what makes the questions appropriate for each type of inquiry.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: An informal inquiry research question might be *Who is the most famous Arctic explorer?* and a formal inquiry research question might be *How did the work of Arctic explorer Ernest Shackleton impact what researchers now know about the Arctic?* The informal inquiry question can be quickly answered, while the formal inquiry question will require more research and source information.

Question 2

Aru needs to write a research paper. He knows he wants to write about something that involves the South Pacific region of the world. What are two possible topics he could write about? Be sure the topics you choose are neither too narrow nor too broad.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Aru could write about the types of foods eaten by the indigenous peoples of the South Pacific, or about the importance of the South Pacific in geopolitics today.

Question 3

Jemma is trying to choose a research question for an essay on a famous historical invention. What are two possible research questions she could choose? Write one informal inquiry research question and one formal inquiry question. Explain the difference between these questions, and check to make certain that your questions are broad enough to be interesting to answer.

Reveal Answer

Sample answers: One informal inquiry research question might be *How did people access books before the printing press?* and a formal inquiry research question might *How did the printing press change the way average people interacted with literature.* The first question could help Jemma establish some background knowledge about the context surrounding the invention of the printing press. The second question is an example of a formal inquiry because it requires Jemma to use sources and organized research to support her ideas about the impact of the printing press.

Need a little extra support?

[Get Help Here](#)

Practice

Use what you know about research questions to complete the activities.

Activity 1

Marilou is planning a research paper, and she knows she wants the paper to involve islands in some way. She has three different possible research questions for her formal inquiry. For each question, write one or two sentences evaluating whether it is an appropriate research question.

1. What is the biggest island in the world?
2. What is the culture of native Hawaiians?
3. What sports are popular on the island of Ireland?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer:

1. This is not an effective research question because it is too easy to answer. It is more appropriate for an informal inquiry. The answer is the name of a single island; this doesn't lead the reader or writer anywhere interesting.
2. This is an effective research question for a formal inquiry because it is not too broad and not too narrow.
3. This is an effective research question for a formal inquiry because it is very precise without being excessively narrow.

Activity 2

If you were writing Marilou's research paper, what research questions would you use? Write two new research questions, one for an informal inquiry and

another for a formal inquiry, in the space below. Explain how you would use each question to conduct research.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I would use the question *What is hula?* as an informal inquiry research question to build my background knowledge. Then I would use the formal research question *What does the art form of hula tell us about the culture of native Hawaiians?* to guide my research into hula, what it involves, and how this art practice connects with Hawaiian culture over time. I could also use this formal inquiry research question to help me write a thesis statement for my research paper.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I evaluated each of the three potential research questions to determine if they would work for a formal inquiry.
 2. _____ I formed my own research question.
 3. _____ I explained how I would use my research questions to conduct an informal inquiry and a formal inquiry.
-

Objective

Objective

In this section, you will structure ideas in a sustained and persuasive way (for example, by using outlines, note taking, graphic organizers, or lists).

Topic

Think Creatively



Source: Branko Jovanovic. Shutterstock

When writers engage in sustained or persuasive writing—such as a longer research paper or an argumentative presentation on a controversial issue—it’s essential that they structure their ideas effectively. Sustained structure creates a logical progression of ideas that’s easy for readers to follow, and a text or presentation is more likely to persuade an audience if the ideas are clear, connected, and sequenced for maximum impact.

Tools such as lists, graphic organizers, and outlines can help writers think creatively about how to generate, conceptualize, and structure their ideas. Writers can use these tools to brainstorm, to record research notes, to group or categorize ideas, and to organize the ideas into a plan for a presentation.

Question 1

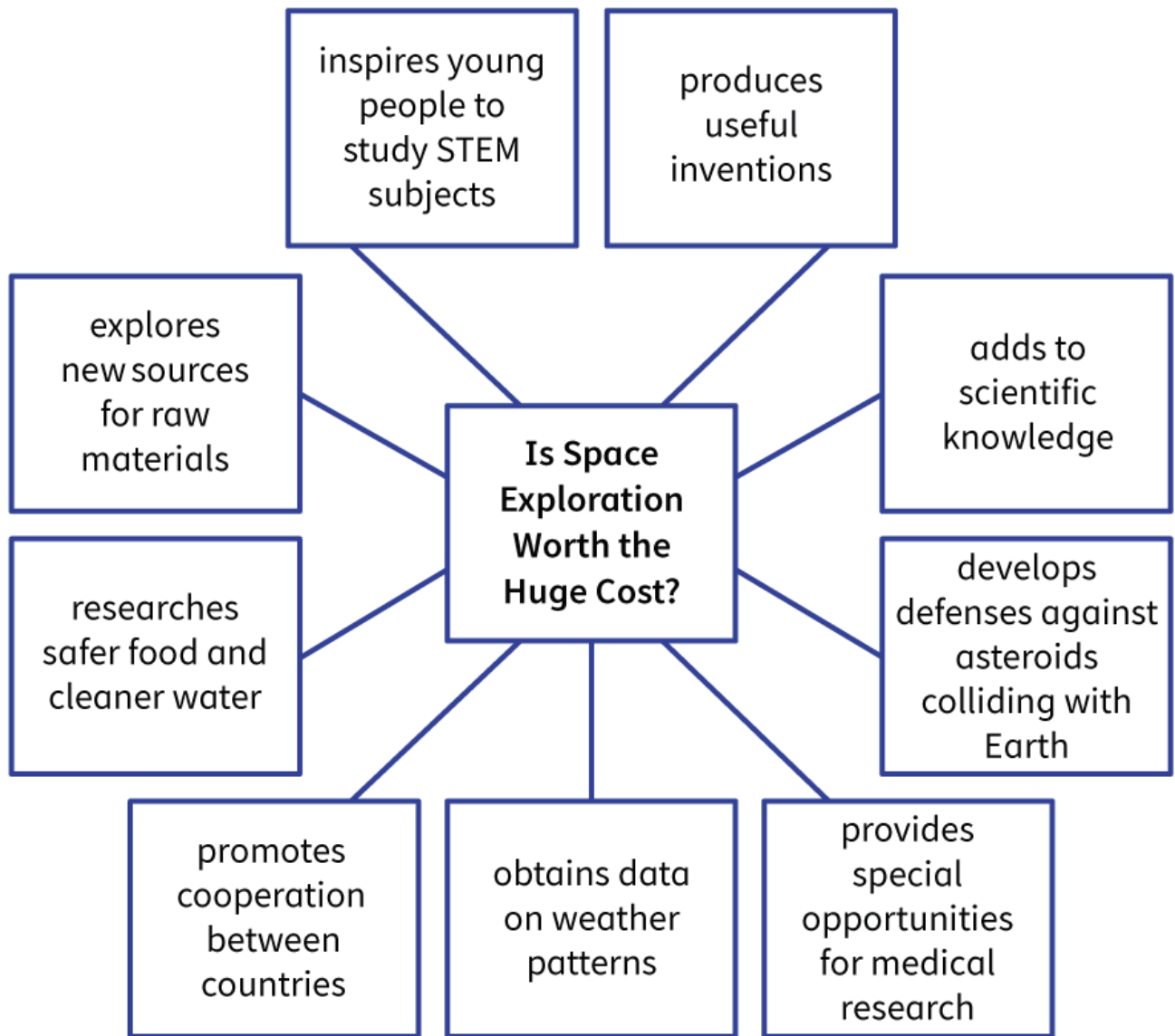
Apply what you know about writing a research paper to explain why a sustained structure is so important.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: A research paper is typically longer than most essays and other texts student writers produce. In a research paper the writer generally summarizes and synthesizes information from a variety of sources in order to explore a topic in depth, answer a research question, or solve a problem. Writers need to structure ideas in a sustained way in this type of writing so that readers can follow the ideas and understand how all of the concepts are connected. Often, writers will use section headings and subheadings to signal the structure in longer works.

Using Graphic Organizers

Writers can generate and structure ideas before, during, or after doing research. When taking notes during research, writers can record key ideas in a graphic organizer such as a table, a flow chart, or a concept web like this one:



Graphic organizers show connections and relationships between concepts, so they can help writers think creatively about what structure to use as they write. For example, a two-column table might be used to compare and contrast ideas or to list pros and cons of an issue. A flow chart might capture steps in a process, a historical sequence, or a series of cause-and-effect relationships. By nailing down these relationships in the planning stage, it's easier for writers to create a sustained structure while writing.

Question 2

Review the concept web on space exploration. Then draw on the same information to create a new chart, table, or other graphic organizer that the writer could use to structure a persuasive presentation on space exploration. Then justify how your organizer would help create a sustained structure while writing.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I can make a three-column chart with the title “Benefits of Space Exploration.”

Column 1 would be “Scientific Research” with the following points underneath it: Adds to knowledge of the universe; Provides special opportunities for medical research; Obtains data on weather patterns.

Column 2 would be “Economics” with the following points underneath it: Produces useful inventions, such as GPS and Velcro; Explores new sources for raw materials.

Column 3 would be “Society” with the following points underneath it: Develops defenses against asteroids colliding with Earth; Promotes cooperation between countries.

The chart would contain the same benefits of space travel as the concept web does. However, it groups the benefits into three categories. This would help provide structure in a sustained way because each category could represent a section of the presentation. Also, the design of the chart makes it somewhat easier to add ideas to it than to a concept web.

Most graphic organizers can easily be modified by adding more columns, rows, boxes, and so forth. So, writers shouldn’t feel limited to the ideas they first map out. Throughout the writing process, they should be open to any new ideas that occur to them.

Topic

Using Lists

Lists are one of the most basic tools writers can use to generate and structure ideas. Whether bulleted or numbered, jotted down on paper or created on a computer, lists can be used at any stage in the writing process, but they are especially helpful in the early stages of exploring a topic. For a research paper, writers might create lists to brainstorm possible topics, subtopics, or research questions; or, they might list notes from sources as they conduct research. For a persuasive presentation they might create lists of reasons, counterclaims, and refutations.

Alondra was exploring ideas for a persuasive presentation on whether high school students should be required to take a foreign language. She brainstormed the following list of ideas:

1. Provides bilingual workers needed in global economy
2. Enhances brain's flexibility and ability to think creatively
3. Promotes understanding/cooperation between cultures within the United States
4. Improves memory and brain's ability to multitask
5. Can make foreign travel easier and more enjoyable
6. Creates a pool of people who can teach the language to the next generation

Question 1

Critique how effective Alondra's list is for the purpose of structuring her ideas in a sustained and persuasive way. Then think creatively to reformulate her list to make it more effective.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Alondra got a decent start in thinking of the benefits of learning a foreign language. But by reviewing the list I can see that the benefits aren't all

equally persuasive; I would delete #5 and #6 because they aren't as compelling as the other benefits. Travel is a nice luxury but it's not vital to one's well-being, and teachers need to be specially trained to teach any subject, not just languages. More importantly, the list of benefits alone doesn't provide anything in the way of structure. Grouping related ideas into categories such as "Benefits to the individual" and "Benefits to society" would help Alondra structure her presentation because she could turn those categories into the sections of her presentation. That would make her ideas easier to follow. The lists below show how Anondra could structure her presentation. The order now reflects the order in which she could present her ideas. It would be more logical, and therefore more persuasive, to discuss benefits to the individual before progressing to the benefits to society.

Benefits to the individual

1. Improves memory and brain's ability to multitask
2. Enhances brain's flexibility and ability to think creatively

Benefits to society

1. Provides bilingual workers needed in global economy
2. Promotes understanding/cooperation between cultures within the U.S.

Using Outlines

Outlines allow writers to make more detailed plans for writing texts or presentations. The simplest outlines can be jotted down quickly like lists. But because outlines include tiers of categories and subcategories, they can also signal relationships between ideas.

Writers can make outlines as long and complex as the content requires by adding categories and subcategories. A formal outline structure uses a mix of alternating Roman and Arabic numerals and capital and lowercase letters: I. A. 1. a. (1) (a) (b) and so on.

The same basic outline structure can be used for a short essay as a longer text with several multi-paragraph sections. Here's an example structure for a longer text:

I. Introductory section

II. Body Section 1/Topic 1

A. Paragraph: Subtopic or supporting idea 1

1. Evidence

2. Evidence

B. Paragraph: Subtopic or supporting idea 2

1. Evidence

2. Evidence

C. Paragraph: Subtopic or supporting idea 3

1. Evidence

2. Evidence

III. Body Section 2/Topic 2

A. Paragraph: Subtopic or supporting idea 1

1. Evidence

2. Evidence

B. Paragraph: Subtopic or supporting idea 2

1. Evidence

2. Evidence

IV. Body Section 3/Topic 3

A. Paragraph: Subtopic or supporting idea 1

1. Evidence

2. Evidence

B. Paragraph: Subtopic or supporting idea 2

1. Evidence

2. Evidence

V. Concluding section

Question 2

Review this list that a writer jotted down after doing some initial research for a presentation on the use of genetically modified (GMO) crops:

- 1.** GMO crops are often planted in large areas, leading to a lack of crop diversity and often depleting the fertility of the soil.
- 2.** Many GMO crops are designed to be resistant to insecticides, but using more weed killer can result in weeds becoming resistant to these chemicals.
- 3.** GMO foods often have little flavor and make meals less appealing to consumers.
- 4.** The long-term effects of GMOs are not well understood and may do more harm than good.
- 5.** The companies that produce GMO crops often control the entire line of production, from research to sales of seeds to production of pesticides, making them near-monopolies.

Transform the list into an outline that will help guide the writer's research and also structure their ideas in a sustained and persuasive way.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer:

- I.** Introduction: Need to add a claim about GMOs.
- II.** GMO crops are often planted in large areas, leading to a lack of crop diversity and often depleting the fertility of the soil.
 - A.** Why GMOs are used.
 - B.** Why crop diversity matters.

- C.** How GMOs deplete the soil and what the consequences are.
- III.** Many GMO crops are designed to be resistant to insecticides, but using more insecticides can result in weeds becoming resistant to these chemicals.
 - A.** How certain GMO crops are made resistant to insecticides.
 - B.** This encourages continued use of insecticides, which have been proven harmful to animals and humans.
 - C.** Insecticide-resistant weeds can crowd out GMO crops and can spread to neighboring farms, where they strangle other crops too.
- IV.** The companies that produce GMO crops often control the entire line of production, from research to sales of seeds to production of pesticides, making them near-monopolies.
 - A.** How this crowds out competition and makes it harder for smaller farms, including organic farms, to succeed.
 - B.** What this means to the future of farming in the United States.
- V.** Conclusion: The long-term effects of GMOs are still being researched, but based on what we already know, we should demand that companies stop genetically modifying crops.

Check-In

Use what you've learned about using graphic organizers, lists, and outlines to structure ideas in a sustained and persuasive way to complete the activity.

Activity

The student who created the concept web about space exploration fleshed out their ideas to create the following outline:

- I.** Introduction: Claim: Investing large sums of money in space exploration is worthwhile because of the many benefits.
- II.** Body Section 1: Benefits for Scientific Research
 - A.** Adds to knowledge of the universe, such as star formation
 - B.** Provides special opportunities for medical research, including research on diseases
 - C.** Obtains data on weather patterns and melting of ice caps
- III.** Body Section 2: Benefits to the Economy
 - A.** Produces useful inventions, such as GPS, cordless tools, scratch-resistant glasses, and Velcro
 - B.** Explores new sources for raw materials, such as minerals from moon
- IV.** Body Section 3: Benefits to Society
 - A.** Develops satellite defenses against asteroids colliding with Earth
 - B.** Promotes cooperation between countries, such as the International Space Station
 - C.** Inspires young people to study STEM subjects
- V.** Conclusion: We should continue expanding space exploration in the future; the cost is worth it!

Assess the outline and advise the writer on what changes they should make to structure their ideas in a sustained and persuasive way.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The outline is well organized and includes many persuasive ideas. However, right now, the outline doesn't acknowledge any counterclaims. One or more counterclaims should be added somewhere. The writer's claim is that "Investing large sums of money in space exploration is worthwhile because of the many benefits." Their claim is a tacit refutation of the counterclaim that we *shouldn't* invest our money in space exploration, so that counterclaim should be acknowledged in the introduction. The writer could lead with that in the introduction to frame the issue and introduce their own claim. For example: "Many people object to spending billions of dollars a year on the space program. They feel the money would be better spent investing in providing health care, creating jobs, and investing in education. However, this is short-sighted. In fact, we should . . ." They could then refute the counterclaim in the concluding section by summarizing how all of the benefits to space exploration outweigh the costs. Or, they could refute the counterclaim in each of their three body sections by estimating the net effect of scientific knowledge, economic benefits, and societal benefits as they discuss them.

Another possible counterclaim is that we shouldn't expend so much of our time and expertise on studying space when there are so many problems we need to fix on planet Earth. The writer has different options for how to incorporate this counterclaim, but one is that they could add a Body Section 4 and focus on that counterclaim. They could add one or more concessions to their outline, followed by one or more refutations.

Finally, the writer should sharpen the points in their conclusion to ensure that they create a powerful and persuasive ending. They should restate their claim in a clear way and add a call to action so that readers know what they can do to support the space program.

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Practice

Activity

Choose a contemporary issue or topic you are interested in. Use at least two of the tools you read about to generate and structure ideas on that topic in a sustained and persuasive way. Then assess the limitations and merits of using each tool in different stages of the writing process.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Topic: Why do people choose to attend community colleges?

LIST:

They provide specialized vocational training—e.g., nursing and computer science.

They offer flexibility—night classes, getting prerequisites.

Many have relationships with four-year colleges, making transfers easy.

Night classes are convenient for people with full-time jobs.

Four-year colleges present barriers to students.

Tuition at 4-year schools is high—transferring in is cheaper.

Students have a second chance if their high school grades weren't great.

OUTLINE

I. Introduction:

A. Community colleges and junior colleges fill an important niche in the educational system.

B. Claim—Local governments should help to fund community colleges and junior colleges to best meet the needs of their diverse communities.

II. Body Section 1: Community colleges offer vocational training and other special programs.

- A.** Not everyone wants or needs to attend a four-year university.
- B.** Many careers don't require a 4-year degree.
- C.** Community colleges provide specialized vocational training for careers such as nursing and computer science.
- D.** Community colleges offer some programs not available at four-year colleges.

III. Body Section 3: Community colleges make it possible for a broader range of people to transfer into a four-year college.

- A.** Many community colleges have relationships with four-year colleges, which helps make transfers easy.
- B.** Tuition at four-year colleges can be prohibitively high; transferring in after two years can save money.
- C.** People from other linguistic backgrounds can improve their language skills before transferring into a four-year college.
- D.** People can complete their prerequisites and work on improving their grades if they didn't have great grades in high school; that way they have a better chance of being admitted to a four-year college.
- E.** People whose education was disrupted for whatever reason can return to school.

IV. Body Section 3: Community colleges are flexible; they meet the needs of a diverse cross-section of the community.

- A.** They offer many night classes, an important convenience for parents or people with full-time jobs.

- B.** They offer extended education for seniors and anyone wanting to pick up an extra skill or craft or simply connect with others in their community.

V. Conclusion:

- A.** Community colleges provide flexibility to students, whether they are earning a two-year degree, vocational training, or credits to transfer into a four-year university.
- B.** Local governments should help to fund community colleges and junior colleges.
- C.** Call to action: Demand that local leaders invest in the future by allocating funds for city colleges.

I started out by jotting down a list of reasons why people choose to go to community colleges. Lists often help when I do an initial “spill” of my ideas. Then I looked over my list and pulled out the bigger points that I thought I should explore. I thought about categories that might correspond to the different sections of my presentation. Once I had some main categories nailed down, I began creating an outline. For me, the outline is the easiest way to incorporate the subtopics and examples that I will make in my presentation. An outline is also the best way to see how logical my structure is and whether I have enough supporting evidence. So, as often happens when I create my outline, I immediately saw the limitations of my list. After more thought, I realized that my three body sections should focus on vocational training, transfer students, and meeting the needs of a diverse community. The outline isn’t perfect but it’s far enough along that it would definitely help me structure ideas in a sustained and persuasive way for a paper or presentation. I think the only thing that’s missing is to incorporate a counterclaim somewhere. I’ll have to do some research to find out more about what opponents say about why community colleges shouldn’t be funded.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I created two tools to help me structure my ideas about a contemporary issue using what I learned in this lesson.
 2. _____ I structured ideas in a sustained and persuasive way.
 3. _____ I assessed the strengths and limitations of various tools for structuring ideas in a sustained and persuasive way.
-

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will narrow or broaden the inquiry in a research project when appropriate.

Key Words

- **inquiry** – a process of study that involves asking questions, making inferences, and testing those inferences
-

Topic



Source: pixelman. Shutterstock

The research process is key to the success of a presentation. It can provide persuasive support for a writer's ideas and reveal whether a topic is too broad or too narrow. If a writer finds an overwhelmingly large amount of information about a topic, the topic is too broad. If they find little or no information, the topic is too narrow.

Writers can adjust the scope of their [inquiry](#) to change their topic as needed. Inquiry is a process of study that involves asking questions, making inferences, and testing those

inferences. It can be difficult to judge whether a topic is appropriate. If an inquiry is too narrow, the presentation will be very short and light on information. If the inquiry is too broad, it might take too much time to complete the research for the presentation. As writers start researching, they should get an indication of whether they have a problem with the scope of their inquiry.

Narrowing an Inquiry

If writers find so many good articles and other source material about their topic that they are overwhelmed, the topic is probably too broad, and they should narrow the scope of their inquiry. Otherwise, it will take them too long to sort through all of the information. In addition, it will be difficult to keep the text or presentation from being too long.

There are many ways to reduce the scope of inquiry for argumentative writing. The following table shows some of the most effective ways:

Methods for Narrowing a Research Topic with Examples	
Method for Narrowing	Examples

Limit the time period.	Instead of studying the entire history of U.S. involvement in foreign wars, limit the period to 1946–1989.
Use a more specific location.	Instead of discussing endangered birds in the entire U.S., use the Rocky Mountain region.
Study one part of a population or group.	Instead of discussing the impact of education on earnings for an entire population, study women only.
Focus on one perspective.	Instead of discussing several arguments against government regulations, focus on one.

Imagine that Sebastian is working on an argumentative presentation and has selected the topic of improving treatment for people with mental illness. When he enters his topic into a search engine, he gets hundreds of millions of hits. Considering how to narrow his inquiry, he decides to choose one type of mental illness. Sebastian has an uncle who has schizophrenia, and so he decides to focus on that part of the population of people with mental illness. Having a personal connection to a topic can help heighten your interest in the inquiry and make it more fulfilling to explore.

Or suppose that Destiny has been assigned an argumentative text on social media. She decides to argue that children under the age of 12 should not be allowed on social media. She finds that some social media platforms have lots of content inappropriate for adolescents. She decides to focus on just one popular social media platform that does not have as much inappropriate content.

Question

Janine has chosen the topic of creating more national parks for an argumentative essay. She thinks parks can help protect important natural ecosystems. When she begins her research, however, she finds that there are many types of ecosystems in need of protection, and national parks

would be a useful means of protecting only some of them. How could Janine narrow the scope of her inquiry?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Janine could limit the inquiry by focusing on just one type of ecosystem, such as wetlands or deserts.

Topic

Broadening an Inquiry

Dealing with overly broad topics is not the only challenge a writer faces when conducting an inquiry; the topic also can be too narrow. This can happen when there is not enough source material about a topic. There may be no books or articles about the subject, or it may be mentioned only briefly in texts that focus more on other topics.

By broadening the inquiry, writers can find a topic with enough source material to write or present about. Writers can broaden their inquiry by doing the opposite of the adjustments mentioned in the table in the previous section. Here is a list of these opposites:

- Expand the time period of the topic.
- Use a wider or more general location.
- Study a larger population or group that includes the population that is too narrow.
- Focus on multiple perspectives of an issue.

Suppose that Eugene is conducting an inquiry on endangered species of animals in the county that he lives in. After several hours of research, he determines that there are no known endangered species in his county. He decides to expand his inquiry to include his whole state. He finds that there are two species of a bird called the plover that are endangered. He is able to find enough information on these birds to prepare a persuasive presentation on the topic.

Or imagine Hannah has been assigned a persuasive composition and is interested in the topic of women authors from the mid-1700s who should be added to high school literature curricula. She finds works by two authors she likes, but she can't find much biographical information about them. She wants to incorporate biographical information to contextualize and humanize her topic. She decides to expand her inquiry

to the entire eighteenth century and is able to identify other authors that have more biographical information available.

Another time when writers need to broaden their inquiry is when they find some very technical, domain-specific language in their initial research. In this case, they need to take a step back and get a general overview of the topic that includes definitions of some of this special language. An encyclopedia is one source that usually provides this type of overview.

As you watch the following video, observe how two students work through research questions to find one that is neither too broad nor too narrow. Take some notes so that you can answer the questions that follow.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Question 1

Do you agree with the way the two students in the video narrowed the scope of inquiry for the project? Explain how they narrowed the topic and whether you agreed with this approach and why.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The students decided to focus on one type of geological formation, strata, and they choose a place that has strata—the Grand Canyon. They could have improved their approach by getting a better general understanding of the topic before making this choice.

Question 2

After the two students narrow the inquiry, how do they deal with the problem of domain-specific geology vocabulary that they don't understand?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: They broaden the inquiry by taking a step back and get a more general understanding of geological history that includes the vocabulary terms.

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Check-In

Use what you've learned about narrowing or broadening an inquiry for a research project to answer the questions below.

Question 1

Tadi is preparing an argumentative presentation for which his claim is that Indigenous Peoples' Day should be recognized by his state as an official holiday. He has prepared several arguments to support this claim, but he is finding that these arguments each have many articles written about them. He is concerned about how much research time he will need and how long the presentation will be. How would you suggest that he narrow his inquiry?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Tadi could choose to focus on the one argument that he likes the most. This would give him time to prepare ample support for this idea.

Question 2

Jocelyn has chosen the topic of water pollution and has written a claim that the United States should fund a clean-up effort for plastic water bottles in the ocean. She learned that some sea animals mistake the bottles for jellyfish, eat them, and die. In her early research, she has had difficulty finding reliable estimates as to the number of plastic water bottles in the ocean and how much time it would take to remove them. How could she broaden her inquiry?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Jocelyn could expand her claim to include all types of plastic polluting the ocean and search for data on that topic.

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Practice

Activity

Three students have chosen topics for persuasive compositions.

- Lael is writing a composition urging city officials to establish a bike-sharing program for all residents.
- Keith is writing a presentation arguing against the collection of people's information when they visit websites.
- Sanjita is writing an essay about how electric cars have benefited the country this year.

Which claim is most likely too broad and needs to be narrowed? How could the writer narrow it?

Which claim is likely too narrow and needs to be broadened? How could the writer broaden it?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Keith's claim is too broad because he doesn't say what sort of information he is concerned about; for example, websites need to know which computer address to display their web pages on. Keith could specify which type of information he believes should be kept private.

Sanjita's claim is likely too narrow because data is not available until after a year has ended. She could see what the latest year is that has complete data and focus on it.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I identified a topic that is too broad and explained how it could be narrowed.
 2. _____ I identified a topic that is too narrow and explained how it could be broadened.
-

Sources

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will choose a variety of sources for research, including text and multimedia.

Key Words

- **sources** – texts or digital resources from which information is obtained
-

Sources

The work in putting together a research paper is typically evenly divided between two tasks: finding information and writing about the information in an appropriate format. In this lesson, we'll look at how writers find information and choose sources, or the texts or digital resources that contain information.

Choosing Sources



Source: Izf. Shutterstock

Any research project a writer conducts must be based on multiple sources. Suppose that Elena is doing research on the history of hiking and backpacking in the United States. Her research question is *How have hiking and backpacking changed through history?* and she's found a book in the library with the title *Hiking and Backpacking Over the Years*. It might be tempting for Elena to stop looking for other sources and just use this book; its title, after all, closely matches her research question. If the source is reliable, she can probably find most of the information she needs in the book.

But that's not a good idea for several reasons. First, the book may not be as reliable as Elena thinks and, if she doesn't consult other sources, she'll never know where it's mistaken. Therefore, Elena could be introducing any errors present in *Hiking and Backpacking Over the Years* into her own work, and that's a problem. Second, overreliance on a single source makes it more likely that the writer will unconsciously plagiarize that source—that is, use the source's words as their own. Third, readers may very well question why they should read Elena's paper when all of her information can also be found in a published book! And finally, using a single source suggests that the writer didn't work very hard. In the example of Elena's paper on hiking and backpacking, Elena should take the time to check through multiple sources rather than stopping after she finds one book, no matter how helpful that book may be. As a very general rule of thumb, a research paper should include at least as many sources as it has pages—so five sources for a five-page paper, eight or more sources for an eight-page paper, and so on.

Types of Sources

There are many different types of sources that writers can use to find the information they need. Some of them include:

- printed books
- e-books
- printed magazine articles and newspapers
- articles appearing online

- professionally written encyclopedias and dictionaries
- almanacs
- podcasts
- multimedia, including videos and infographics
- photographs
- audiobooks
- recorded music

You'll notice that some of these sources are print sources, such as physical books, magazines, and newspapers that can often be found in a public or academic library. Other kinds of sources include digital sources and multimedia, which need to be accessed using a computer, a tablet, or some other kind of electronic device. With digital and multimedia sources, there are so many options available that the biggest problem for researchers isn't finding enough sources, but rather determining whether a source is useful or accurate.

Usefulness and Accuracy

When considering any kind of source, the writer should determine if the source will be useful for answering their research question and if the source's information is factually accurate. Let's return to Elena's research on the history of hiking and backpacking for a moment. Elena is in a library and comes across a small book entitled *Songs for Hiking and Backpacking*. There's a lovely picture on the cover of two women in hiking gear carrying backpacks; they are singing as they make their way down a trail deep in the forest. This book is about hiking and backpacking, so it might be useful to Elena in her research, right? Well, no. Recall that Elena's research is about the *history* of hiking and backpacking, and it seems unlikely that this book will have much to say about that history. The book may be very interesting to Elena for personal reasons, but probably won't assist her in her project in any meaningful way.

Aside from a source's title, another way to gauge its usefulness and accuracy is to consider what kind of source it is. For example, a wiki website by its nature is not the

kind of source writers should use in research assignments. Anyone can post and edit text on a wiki, which is what makes this open-source platform so appealing to users. While moderators and users may do their best to find and fix mistakes, there's no guarantee that the information on the site is always true. Careful writers and researchers therefore avoid using wiki websites as sources.

In contrast, the editors of a professionally written encyclopedia have much more control over what goes into their works. A fact that appears in one of these encyclopedias has probably been checked by several people before being published. As a result, writers can trust that these facts are likely to be accurate; these encyclopedias are reliable in a way that a wiki is not. The same holds true with a professionally produced video as opposed to something posted by a random user on a social media website. Blogs and personal fan sites are to be avoided for the same reason. National and well-established newspapers, magazines, and book publishers are more reliable because they check the facts that appear in their publications.

More generally, writers and researchers can use clues to determine whether a website or other source is accurate. Looking at the end of a website's address can often be helpful, for example. Addresses that end in .gov or .edu are likely to be accurate—the first is associated with the federal, state, or local governments and the second with universities. Websites ending in .biz and .com are less reliable. Another clue has to do with the way the website looks. Does it have a clean, professional look with no misspellings and grammatical errors? Then it may very well have useful information. If it's full of typos and looks generally amateurish, though, writers should steer clear of accepting the information they contain.

The age of a source is another issue which can compromise reliability. For most research projects, writers want to use sources that are up-to-date. Suppose that Jared wants to write a paper about the rise in the number of kayakers in the United States. He will need to find very recent statistics about the number of kayakers. A source from 1998 or even 2012 is out of date and ought not to be used. Librarians can be helpful in locating recent sources; they can also advise writers on which sources are most reliable and which are not.

Question

Aidan is writing a research paper on electric bicycles. He goes online and finds several websites that might be possible sources. What should he look for to make sure these sources are accurate?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The websites should end with .gov or .edu or be published by a reliable publisher; they should be dated within the last two or three years if at all possible; they should look well-designed, with few if any typos; they should be associated with a professional company rather than be a blog or a fan site.

Check-In

Consider what you have learned about finding sources as you answer these questions.

Question 1

Complete the cloze activity below.

Question 2

Jessica is writing a research paper using the following research question:

How have competitions like the X Games popularized extreme sports? What sources could Jessica use? Give three possible useful and accurate options.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Jessica could use the official website of competitions, such as the X Games. She could also use sources that describe extreme sports, such as a book written within the last five years about extreme sports or online articles from the last two or three years that describe extreme sports. She could also use multimedia showing extreme sports, such as an official video from the X Games.

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Practice

Review this list of sources that Marty found to help him write a research paper on the dangers faced by American forests in the 21st century:

- a book called *American Forests at Risk*, published in 1985
- a recent article from a large newspaper about the impact of development on forests
- someone's personal blog about forests
- a federal government website about pollution's effect on forests, dating from two years ago
- a recent podcast about how to tell trees by their leaves

Now complete the activities.

Activity 1

Evaluate each source Marty used. Determine if the source is useful and reliable. Explain your reasoning.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer:

- The book's title suggests that it is on topic, but it's too old to be of much use.
- The article gives important information about one big risk to forests. It's recent and from a reliable source, so it's probably useful.
- Personal blogs are not necessarily reliable. Marty should use a different source.
- The website has a .gov address and explores another big risk to forests. Since it's just two years old, it should be useful and

reliable.

- The podcast is recent, but to judge from the topic it doesn't connect with Marty's topic and so probably isn't useful.

Activity 2

Use your understanding of sources to choose three useful and accurate sources for Marty to use to write his research paper. Include different types of sources.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I think Marty should use an infographic or interactive map to show the changes to forests over time. Marty could also look for relevant information on a government website that focuses on national parks and forests. Finally, Marty could use a print book from the last five years that describes American forests and the risks they face.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activities by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I identified whether each source was useful and reliable.
 2. _____ I explained my reasoning.
 3. _____ I chose a variety of sources for research, including both text and multimedia.
-

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will analyze the credibility of a source.

Key Words

- **primary source** – original document or firsthand account of an event or a topic
 - **secondary source** – document or account about an event or a topic created by someone who was not directly involved
-

Sources

Reason Effectively to Analyze Credibility

In doing research, a writer will come across different types of sources that offer different advantages to different types of writing. Sources can also have shortcomings. The research writer's task is to discern which sources are credible, or convincing and believable. To do so, the writer must reason effectively to evaluate the source, taking into consideration its author, point of view, and evidence.

Primary sources are based on firsthand experience or present original records of an event. Diaries, letters, interviews, legislation, and similar works are considered primary sources. As sources created at the time of an event, they have the advantage of being unfiltered; the events and information detailed in a primary source are relayed directly to the reader without an intermediary's interpretation. Problems with primary sources can include that they are, by nature, anecdotal evidence. A memoir from a lottery winner, for example, is not good evidence that playing lotteries is a reliable way to make money; the experience of a single person may not be representative of the majority of people. Primary sources often lack objective analysis.

When evaluating the credibility of a primary source, a research writer needs to determine whether the writing conveys bias, based on the author's credibility as a source and his or her subjective perspective of events. For example, if a news article was written during the height of the yellow journalism era, a researcher will need to ensure the veracity of the primary source by checking the reputation of the journalist and the publication and reading other firsthand accounts.

Question 1

What is one benefit and one limitation of primary sources?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: One benefit is that a primary source presents firsthand experience. One limitation of some primary sources is their subjectivity.

Secondary sources analyze or restate primary sources. Often, a secondary source references a variety of primary sources and other secondary sources to build an analysis of a topic or work of literature. Secondary sources can include biographies, literary analyses, and research presentations, for example. Secondary sources can be useful because they emphasize the important and relevant details and omit unnecessary information. Secondary sources can interpret technical topics to make them simpler and more accessible for readers who aren't familiar with the concepts being discussed. Secondary sources also provide a writer's insight into a topic, which can serve as support for the research writer's own argument.

When using secondary sources, a research writer must evaluate the credibility of the primary sources and the logic of the author's analysis. The author should have credentials that lend authority to the analysis, and the publisher of secondary sources should be considered reputable. Internet searches can be a useful tool to check on a writer's or publisher's reputation and credentials. If the writer and publisher are considered reliable and truthful, then their secondary source is likely to be credible.

Tertiary sources, like secondary sources, take information from other sources rather than personal experience. Unlike secondary sources, they usually do not add information or analysis. Tertiary sources include encyclopedias, most textbooks, and dictionaries. These sources are great for references when a writer wants to find basic information about a topic, but they are of limited value for finding out how people felt about significant people, events, or ideas. Reputable, well-known tertiary sources have been thoroughly fact-checked. Writers should be cautious when citing online tertiary sources, however, as many online reference sites have user-generated content.

Determine whether the contributors are vetted professionals or simply people who signed up with a username and password. In addition, if an online source contains spelling and grammar mistakes or lacks citations on many claims, then it is not likely a reliable source.

As writers conduct research, they need to use their own reasoning skills effectively to determine the credibility of the sources they choose. Research presentations should

reference a variety of authoritative sources, including online and print sources, as well as primary, secondary, and possibly tertiary sources.

Question 2

Which of the three types of sources would be most likely to provide in-depth analysis of an event?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: A secondary source would most likely provide in-depth analysis, because secondary sources examine primary sources and other secondary sources and establish meaning through analysis of them.

Identify to Analyze

There are a few things you can do to critically analyze a source. First, it is important to understand the author's main and supporting ideas. If you don't understand the message and/or facts presented in a source, it is difficult to analyze it for credibility. Next you can examine the points of view presented. A credible source will present different points of view, including ones that the author may not agree with. Presenting different ideas allows the reader to make judgements of their own.

Once you understand the ideas and viewpoints presented in a source, it's important to look for things that don't make sense. This includes conflicting information and misconceptions. These may be presented as facts but won't have any evidence to support them. Some sources will use phrases like "Leading scientists claim..." but not cite the data the claim comes from. Other examples include statements based on pseudoscience, or beliefs that are stated to be scientific but are not. Believing that people are either right-brained or left-brained is an example of pseudoscience. Many people believe it to be true, but it is not based on scientific evidence.

Lastly, always check sources for bias. The following things may be present in a source that has bias.

- Only one group of people's perspective or one viewpoint is presented.
- The language is highly opinionated.
- There is negative talk or language about a group of people.
- It presents sensationalized information or images.

Identifying these things while analyzing sources will allow you to get the whole picture on a topic. The more information you have on a topic, the more credible your writing will be. You may find sources that present only one side to a problem. These can still be used in an argumentative essay to share examples of what some people believe about a topic. Sources with bias can be used as cautionary tales in an informational paper.

Check-In

Use what you learned about analyzing the credibility of a source and reasoning effectively to answer the questions below.

Question 1

A research writer is working on a presentation about the Jewish experience of the Holocaust. Would *The Diary of Anne Frank*, a firsthand account of Anne Frank's experience during World War II, be a credible source to include with other sources? Explain. What type of source is it?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: As a firsthand account recorded in diary form, *The Diary of Anne Frank* is a primary source. It would be considered credible because it is directly related to the topic of the Jewish experience of the Holocaust.

Question 2

A research writer is investigating British Prime Minister Winston Churchill's career and influence on World War II and the Cold War. Identify three sources that the writer might consult and explain how the writer could evaluate the sources' credibility.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The writer might consult Churchill's speeches, primary sources; news reviews of his speeches, secondary sources; and an encyclopedia, tertiary source. The writer should consider the content of the speeches and their relevance to the topic, as well as their subjectivity and bias. The news reviews of the speeches would show how people interpreted and responded to Churchill's claims. A writer would need to consider the reputation of the news organization to determine credibility. The encyclopedia article could be consulted for background

information and details about Churchill's life and contributions. The encyclopedia should be reputable and written by experts.

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Question 3

What are five things you can identify in a source when analyzing it for credibility?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: the ideas presented, the points of view, conflicting ideas, misconceptions, and bias

Question 4

Read the following excerpt and explain how it contains bias.

People over 55 should not work in jobs requiring physical labor. After 55 the body can be more easily hurt. This puts a liability on the companies that older people work for. It also makes work more difficult for younger workers who do not get hurt as often. When aging colleagues must take off work for injuries, others must do extra work to compensate. If you are over the age of 55, you should find a nice, safe desk job.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: It is highly opinionated and only presents one viewpoint. It also makes negative statements about older people.

Practice

A student writer conducts research for a presentation on the effects of gentrification in major American cities. Read the list of potential sources, keeping in mind what you learned about analyzing the credibility of a source.

1. Demsas, Jerusalem. “What we talk about when we talk about gentrification.” *Vox*. Vox Media, LLC., Sept. 5, 2021. (agenda.)
2. Desmond, Matthew. “The Rent Eats First: How Renters and Communities Are Impacted by Today’s Housing Market.” Testimony before U.S. Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs, August 2, 2022. Published by Princeton University Eviction Lab.
3. “Gentrification.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster.
4. National Center for Environmental Health. “Health Effects of Gentrification.” Center for Disease Control and Prevention. October 15, 2009.
5. “Shifting Neighborhoods: Gentrification and cultural displacement in American cities.” *NCRC Research*, March 2019, National Community Reinvestment Coalition.

Activity

Write one question about each source that would be helpful in analyzing the credibility of the source. Also identify what kind of source each source is.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer:

Source 1 is a secondary source. Question: Is Vox Media an objective source, or does it tend to have a bias?

It is not clear if Source 2 is a primary source or secondary source.

Question:

Is Mr. Desmond a victim of gentrification or an expert on gentrification?

Source 3 is a tertiary source. Question: Is this a recent edition of the dictionary, or one that is many years old?

Source 4 is a secondary source. Question: Does this government agency have a report that is more up-to-date?

Source 5 is a secondary source. Question: Is this organization a research organization or a political organization?

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I analyzed each source and identified a question I could use to evaluate its credibility.
 2. _____ I inferred if each source is primary, secondary, or tertiary.
-

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will prepare appropriate citations.

Key Words

- **citation** – a reference to a source used to inform a piece of writing
 - **plagiarism** – the act of taking words or ideas from a source and passing them off as one's own
-

Sources



Source: insta_photos. Shutterstock

Preparing Citations

A [citation](#) is an acknowledgement of where information originated in a piece of writing. To be credible and to avoid [plagiarism](#), a writer should provide a list of sources for information that is neither general knowledge nor from their own experiences. This information might be rephrased in the writer's own words for paraphrased text or used directly from the source and marked off with quotation marks in quoted text.

Citations generally contain the information needed to identify specific sources. This includes the obvious details, such as the author and title, but also things like who published the source and in which specific volume or edition the information can be found. Information on the internet can be more dynamic and ephemeral than what is set to paper, so online citations require some additional details.

Check out some examples in an excerpt from a list of citations. Select the button. Then, select each pin to learn more about citing sources. There are six pins.

To prepare an appropriate citation, a writer should consider how they are using the information within their writing. If the writer wants to use information from a source without directly quoting, then they should paraphrase the information by restating key ideas in their own words. If the writer wants to use information directly from a source, then they should record the information exactly as it appears in the source and set that information apart from the rest of their text using quotation marks.

For both paraphrased and quoted text, the writer should include citation information within the text and in a list of sources, such as a bibliography. Within the text, the writer should include the first part of the full citation, and a page number if needed, within parentheses.

Question 2

Explain how a writer would cite a source within a text when creating paraphrased text.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: A writer would rephrase information from the source in their own words and include the first part of the full citation in parentheses.

Check-In

Use what you learned about preparing citations to answer the following questions.

Question 1

Turn the following social media post into a citation.

URL: www.wechat.com/thekpopkid/status/113478618

Ken Jameson

@thekpopkid

Why isn't drive-thru sushi a thing? I think it'd work.

Tuesday, March 27, 2021 4:16 pm

24 likes 8 comments 12 rechats Report

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Jameson, Ken. WeChat post. March 27, 2021, 4:16 p.m.

www.wechat.com/thekpopkid/status/113478618

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Question 2

What would the name of a website be equivalent to in the citation of a print source?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The website is placed after the title of the actual webpage, similar to how a book's title appears after the title of a short story or poem within it. Unlike

a book title, a website is not italicized.

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Question 3

What is the following citation for?

Stein, Abby. "October Colors." Filmed October 2022 at Annadel State Park.

Video, <https://www.naturefilm.com/video/5907771>

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer:

The citation is for a video called "October Colors" filmed by Abby Stein.

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Question 4

How would a writer create a citation for quoted text from a book within the text?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The writer would set the information in quotation marks. Then, the writer would include the author's last name and a page number in parentheses.

Practice

Use what you know about preparing citations to complete the activity below.

Activity 1

Make a bibliography for your online activity today. Choose at least three activities you did online. They could be websites you visited, videos you watched, social media posts you read, or even something you posted. Use the appropriate format and include all the necessary information. Remember to put the citations in alphabetical order.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer:

Coleman, Sam. "Hercules Versus the Martians." Sam's Movie Reviews.

accessed June 10, 2022,

<https://www.samwatches.com/reviews/6102022>

FunnyCats24/7. "Cat Sits on Dog." Posted June 9, 2022. Video, 2:32.

Newman, Jeff. MyBoard post. June 10, 2022, 5:15 p.m.

<https://www.myboard.com/user/549815799/status/44976312211>

Activity 2

Choose one source from your online activity. Find a quotation and a section to paraphrase from the source, then use both in a short paragraph.

Remember to include appropriate citations in your paragraph.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: In his review of “Hercules Versus the Martians,” Sam Coleman explains why, despite the strange premise, the movie is still worth your time. For example, Coleman raves about the main actors’ performances by calling them “satirical, compelling, and filled with surprises” (Coleman). Coleman goes on to describe how the characters from the Greek mythology side and the alien side band together to create an alliance for justice. In a pivotal scene, Hercules tells the other characters that the universe is big enough for everyone—mythological being, alien, and everyone else (Coleman). After reading the review, I know that I will be talking to my friends about watching this movie together soon!

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I prepared citations of at least three of my online activities.

2. _____ I used a format appropriate for each type of activity.
 3. _____ I included sufficient information so that someone could find the exact source.
 4. _____ I explained how to prepare citations within a text for both paraphrased text and quoted text.
 5. _____ I used a quotation and paraphrased a part of one of my sources in a short paragraph.
 6. _____ I displayed academic citations in my paragraph as needed.
-

Compiling Research

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will draw evidence from various sources to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Key Words

- **analysis** – a thorough examination of a complex topic with the goal of understanding it
 - **reflection** – the act of looking back on something that happened and drawing a personal conclusion
-

Compiling Research

An important step in preparing to write is finding sources with information about your topic. This could include relevant statistics, expert opinions, firsthand accounts, literary essays, or news articles.

The type of source will depend on what you are writing. A news article may be an appropriate source for an informational text about current events, but it would not make sense in an essay about recurring metaphors in works of fiction.

Gathering information from a variety of sources ensures that the writer is creating a wider base of evidence to support their ideas:

Common Types of Evidence Used in Research and Their Descriptions

Types of Evidence	What It Includes
Anecdotal	personal stories or case studies, such as an autobiographical essay on life during the Great Depression
Testimonial	expert opinions, such as an interview with a forensic scientist on their expertise

Statistical	numbers, percentages, and measurements, such as a chart showing economic growth over time
Analogical	comparisons to similar situations, such as using information on public transit in one city to make recommendations for a comparable city

In addition to providing different types of evidence, sources may also have various formatting:

Types of Sources and Their Descriptions

Source Type	Description
Textual Source	anything written, such as reports, essays, websites, and books
Visual Source	a source with a visual component, such as images and videos
Oral Source	a source with an audio component, such as radio, podcasts, or speeches

Having a variety of types and formats of sources can increase the writer's understanding of the topic. The writer gathers evidence from these sources and then uses the evidence to analyze, reflect upon, and research their topic.

- An analysis is the process of separating a complex topic into smaller parts, so that the writer can study each of these parts and better understand their topic.
- A reflection is when the writer thoughtfully examines the information they have and then draws a conclusion.
- Research is when the writer finds sources; they may need to confirm evidence with another source or expand their sources based on ideas and terms uncovered in their evidence.

Look at the following flipbook to see one student's experience in gathering evidence:

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

With evidence from a variety of sources, the writer is able to make informed decisions and solve problems related to their topic. They can use the information they compiled to evaluate how credible and accurate each source is, such as considering where they got their sources and noting any discrepancies among the data.

Question

How does it benefit the writer to draw evidence from various sources?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Evidence from multiple sources benefits the writer because it makes it easier to analyze a topic, to reflect on conclusions they can make, and to find terms or ideas for further research. Altogether, these benefits lead to more accurate writing and a better understanding of the topic.

Check-In

Consider what you learned about drawing evidence from various sources to answer these questions.

Question 1

What steps can a writer take to analyze their topic?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: They can draw evidence from a variety of sources in order to understand different components of their topic.

Question 2

What would be an example of a writer getting research support from their evidence?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: They could find a chart that confirms information they gathered from another source, such as crime rates in the top ten European cities.

Question 3

What does it mean for evidence to support reflection?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Reflection means considering experiences to draw a conclusion. Writers can bring together evidence and thoughtfully examine the pieces to draw overall conclusions about their topic.

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Practice

Activity

Use the following sources of evidence to answer the questions below.

Source A: Excerpt from the transcript of an informational video on the costs of the American Civil War

NARRATOR:

The American Civil War took a heavy toll on the nation's finances and significantly increased national debt. The war cost the equivalent of \$670 billion in 2022 dollars.

But how did each side raise funds during the war? The Union in the North had an established government with more ready finances at its disposal, yet as war continued the government needed access to more funding. They issued a new currency called "Greenbacks." They also relied on loans from private citizens, wealthy businessmen, and banks in the North.

Meanwhile, the Confederacy had less industry and population to draw from. The Confederate government also made their own currency. They acquired loans from businessmen abroad interested in the cotton industry. They also confiscated goods and enlisted laborers from private citizens in the South. These efforts were not enough to match the financial resources of the North.

Source B: Civil War Facts chart from a national historical organization

Comparison of Civil War Financial Costs and Casualties by Region (in 1860 Dollars)

Region	Finances (1860 dollars)	Casualties
	Finances (1860 dollars)	Casualties
North and Border states	\$263,000,000	642,427
South	\$74,000,000	483,026

Source C: Excerpt from an academic journal article about the economic costs of the Civil War

Introduction

The American Civil War had a significant impact on the course of industrialization and how income was distributed after the war. But just how much war affected the economy has been the subject of many researchers.

This article will discuss both direct and indirect economic cost estimates. Direct costs are found by totaling up the actual spending on each side during the war. Indirect costs are estimated by calculating the economic consumption that would have occurred without a war and subtracting the consumption that actually occurred, given the changes to factories and labor forces to meet the demands of wartime.

Direct Costs

. . . The total direct cost to the North, including losses of funds, resources, and laborers, is estimated at \$3.4 billion in 1860 dollars. . . . The total direct cost to the South, after adjustments and additional calculations due to incomplete data, is estimated at \$3.3 billion in 1860 dollars.

Question 1

What evidence could you draw from to support an analysis of the costs of the Civil War?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I could draw from Source A the evidence of how each side financed the war and from Source B a comparison of actual figures for North and South finances, as well as the human cost. Meanwhile, Source C introduces the idea of direct and indirect economic costs along with estimated figures for what the war cost the overall regional economies.

Question 2

What conclusions can you make about the topic when reflecting on all the evidence? What piece(s) of evidence did you use to form this conclusion?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I can use the evidence that war was financed by private citizens from Source A, the number of casualties in Source B, and the idea of both direct and indirect economic costs in Source C to make the conclusion that the Civil War placed a heavy toll on the daily lives of private citizens not only during the war but also afterwards.

Question 3

What is a term or idea that you would research based on the information in the sources? Why?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I would research the conversion of 1860 dollars to 2022 dollars based on the figures provided in different sources, and I would look for additional sources to support the figures that these sources give because I want to check their accuracy.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I drew evidence from various sources.
 2. _____ I supported analysis, reflection, or research using evidence.
-

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will draw evidence from informational text to support research, evaluating credibility.

Key Words

- **bias** – a prejudice in favor of a view or position
 - **credentials** – someone's qualifications to hold a position or do something
 - **credibility** – the quality of being trustworthy and believable
-

Compiling Research

Assess and Evaluate Information

When a writer is gathering evidence for a text, they want to make sure their sources are reliable. They should choose sources with credibility, which means they are believable and trustworthy. This means paying attention to who wrote the source, where it came from, and if the information can be confirmed in another source. For example, sources should be written by people with appropriate credentials, or qualifications, about the subject; sources should also not have a bias, or prejudice in favor of a particular position.

“Success is not final; failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts.”

This quotation is often attributed to Winston Churchill, yet there is no evidence that he ever said it. A writer needs to be careful with using quotations and other information or they risk spreading misinformation or appearing misinformed.

The 5 W's Test

There are a couple of ways to check the credibility of a source before trusting the evidence in the source. One method is to ask the 5 W's: who, what, where, when, and why.

Evaluating the Credibility of Information Sources

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions to Assess the Source
Who wrote the source?	Do they have the credentials to discuss the topic accurately and with authority?
What did they write?	Is it relevant to the topic and audience?
Where is the information coming from?	Does the author provide citations or a bibliography? Is the source fact-checked or reviewed by someone?
When was the source written?	Is it timeless information such as history facts? Or is it something that needs to be updated, such as current laws and regulations?
Why was the source written?	Are they providing facts or opinions? Does the author have a clear bias toward a certain viewpoint?

Evidence can come from many types of sources, so it is important to notice clues about the source when accessing and evaluating information.

- For a book, is it a reputable publisher? Does the author provide an index and bibliography to help determine if the material is relevant and well researched?
- For a magazine, is there an editor or fact-checker listed? Does the author mention their background or how they got the information? Are they stating opinions or relaying research?
- For a website, does it appear professional and well maintained? A website with working links, no ads, and ending in .edu or .gov are clues to a credible

source with an informational rather than commercial purpose.

These sorts of questions help writers to evaluate the credibility of the information they come across in their research. Writers may access evidence based on statistics, interviews, personal experiences, expert opinions, or comparisons to other situations or events. It could also be textual evidence such as paraphrased, quoted, or summarized information from another text source. Instead of accepting anything they find, writers must also take the time to evaluate if the information is plausible and reliable to support their text.

CAARP Test



Another method to check the credibility of a source is called the CAARP Test, which is a series of questions to ask about a source.

- **Currency:** How timely is the evidence? Is it possibly outdated or inaccurate now?
- **Authority:** Is the author an expert in the subject? Is it a respected publication or self-published? Is it a news article or opinion piece?
- **Accuracy:** Was the information vetted or verified by peer review or trusted organization?
- **Relevance:** Is the source applicable to your topic? Is it written at the same academic level? Would readers trust this source in your bibliography?
- **Purpose:** Why was this source produced? Is it intended for academic, scientific, or educational purposes? Is it designed for marketing a certain philosophy or product? Is the tone of the source objective or is there a suggestion of bias?

An informational text is meant to inform and educate readers, while an argumentative text is meant to persuade readers to adopt a particular perspective or action. A writer drawing evidence from an informational text, therefore, needs to make sure the text is factual without a clear bias.

Question

How are the 5 W's Test and the CAARP Test similar?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Both tests are a series of questions that writers can use to evaluate a source's credibility. These include questions about who wrote the source, their credentials, if the source was fact-checked, and its purpose and possible bias.

Check-In

Consider what you learned about drawing evidence from informational text to support research and evaluate credibility to answer these questions.

Question 1

How can a writer evaluate the credibility of a piece of evidence?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: They can use a series of questions such as the 5 W's or CAARP, which are structured to help writers look for clues about a source's credibility, accuracy, and relevance. For example, the writer can consider the author's authority on their topic, where the information comes from, if the publication is an unbiased and trusted source that is vetted and fact-checked, and the purpose behind why the source was written and how that may affect its credibility.

Question 2

Why is it important to consider the source's purpose?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The purpose is important to make sure the source is informational as opposed to persuasive. A persuasive text may have a clear bias toward a particular viewpoint, so it is not as credible as a source for impartial facts.

Question 3

A student wants to draw evidence about the history of nursing during the Crimean War (1853–1856) from a history website that discusses how nursing practices evolved over time. They notice that the website ends in .com and has flashing ads at the top of the page. The author is a former nurse who enjoys reading historical fiction and maintains the website in their spare time.

What credibility clues might the student pick up about this source using the CAARP test?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer:

- Currency – The website is likely current as the information about nursing during the Crimean War is already established.
- Authority – The author has a nursing background but does not seem to have the credentials to write a factual, historical article about this topic.
- Accuracy – It appears to be a personal website with no fact-checker or editor. The accuracy would need to be confirmed in another source.
- Relevance – The source is relevant and applicable to the student's topic. The academic level may not match what readers would expect for a researched text.
- Purpose – The purpose may be to inform and educate others about nursing. The student would have to consider if the wording suggests a clear bias of personal opinions rather than facts.

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Practice

Activity

Use the following sources of evidence to answer the questions below.



Source: eurobanks. Shutterstock

Source A: Excerpt from a 2007 report published in the U.S. government's National Academies Press, summarizing research findings in social, behavioral, and health sciences regarding teen drivers.

. . . Another risk factor that affects teen drivers more than adult drivers is the need for sleep. Drivers need to be alert to stay safe on the road, yet drowsy driving is a contributing factor in accidents. In a 1995 study led by Dr. Pack of the University of Pennsylvania Medical Center, there is a peak in the teenage years for the number of crashes caused after a driver has fallen asleep at the wheel.

Teenagers typically get 7 to 7.5 hours of sleep per night, but biologically they need around 9 hours of sleep every night. Many factors work against getting enough sleep. This is a period when they may be gaining more control over their daily routine, including bedtimes, as well as acquiring more academic and social activities that lead to later nights. Wider access to electronic devices also contributes to staying up later, with a 2006 study by the National Sleep Foundation reporting that 97% of adolescents have one or more electronic devices in their bedrooms.

Source B: Excerpt from a 2020 article written by a university student for their school newspaper

The driving age is currently 16 years old. Yet drivers at this age are five times more likely to crash than drivers who are 18 years old. One distracted driver could seriously injure themselves and any passengers in the vehicle, as well as increasing the risk to other drivers on the road. I think that the legal driving age should be increased to 18 years old to improve road safety.

Many studies have been done that have shown that starting to drive at a later age decreases the likelihood of traffic accidents. Teenagers are also more likely to practice risky behaviors while driving. The federal agency Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported the results of a 2016–2019 study that drivers ages 16 to 24 years old have lower rates of wearing a seatbelt in the front seat compared to drivers 25 and older, increasing their risk of injury in case of an accident. In addition, the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, run by the CDC, reported that 39% of teen drivers had texted while driving in the 30 days prior to the

national survey. Distracted driving is dangerous, especially for inexperienced drivers.

Raising the driving age to 18 years old would give young drivers two more years to learn safe driving behavior and to practice with a supervising driver so that they are familiar with different road conditions and situations. This extra time would make me feel safer as the passenger in a vehicle with a young driver.

Question 1

What is a credible piece of evidence you could draw to support research on the topic of driving safety? Why is it credible? Is there anything that makes it less credible?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I could draw from Source B the evidence from the CDC's 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey that 39% of teen drivers had texted while driving in the 30 days prior to the survey. This evidence that teen drivers can have risky driving behavior is credible because it is recent and comes from a government body that is intended to collect and report accurate information to the public. This evidence may be less credible because the author does not have credentials and expressed a bias that teen drivers are less safe—the survey should be verified in another source.

Question 2

What is a less credible piece of evidence you could draw out to support research on the topic of driving safety? Why is it less credible and what would make it more credible?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I could draw out the relevant evidence from Source A that a 2006 study by the National Sleep Foundation reported that 97% of adolescents have

one or more electronic devices in their bedrooms. Source A is an informational text written by researchers and it is possible to find and verify this study, but it is less credible because it is likely outdated. It would be more credible if I could find an updated study from the National Sleep Foundation on how many adolescents have electronic devices in their bedrooms and its effect on sleep.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I drew evidence from informational text to support research.
 2. _____ I evaluated the credibility of evidence.
-

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will synthesize multiple sources on the subject demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Key Words

- **synthesize** – to combine information, facts, and ideas from different resources to build an analysis or interpretation
-

Compiling Research

Synthesizing Information

When preparing to write a research text, the writer establishes an inquiry question, does preliminary research, evaluates sources, takes notes on relevant and reliable sources, and starts to organize ideas for the report. Once the actual drafting begins, the writer needs to synthesize what they have learned about their topic from various sources to create their own analyses and interpretations.

Synthesizing Research

Synthesizing goes beyond summarizing. A summary recaps the most important ideas and details in each source. However, a synthesis expands understanding and draws new conclusions using the information from all of your sources. Use the following steps to help synthesize sources when compiling research:

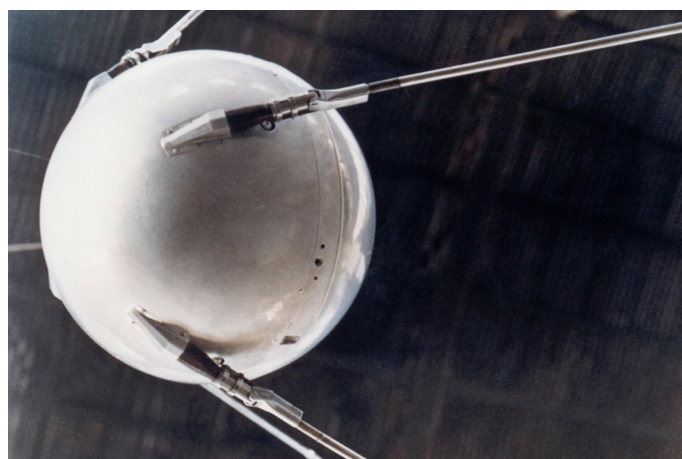
- 1.** Closely read each source, taking notes as you go.
 - a.** What is the point of view of each source?
 - b.** What are the most important ideas in each source?
 - c.** What information and which details support the main ideas?
- 2.** Determine how various sources are connected or related.
 - a.** Do the authors of each source mostly agree or disagree?
 - b.** How are ideas and information across sources the same? How are they different?
 - c.** Do some sources extend research from other sources or ask similar questions?
- 3.** Evaluate the information in various sources to reach new conclusions.
 - a.** Do any sources reveal misconceptions in other sources?
 - b.** Is the information in any source or the sources themselves biased?

- c. What new understanding or conclusions emerge from analyzing how the various sources are related?

Writing a Synthesis

To connect ideas in a seamless way, the writer should use appropriate transitions, such as *in addition* to show how one source builds on another or *on the other hand* to contrast differing opinions. The paragraph should end with the writer's original analysis that clearly connects to the sources quoted.

Synthesis in writing is a way to demonstrate command of a subject, show respect for the contributions of others, and establish one's own ideas or point of view.



As you watch the following video, notice how the student prepares to synthesize information from various sources about the Kuiper Belt and the James Webb telescope.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Peer Model Video Transcript

Now, answer the question.

Question

Speculate on whether you think the writer in the video will do more paraphrasing or quoting when synthesizing ideas about the Kuiper Belt. Explain.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The writer will likely do more paraphrasing than quoting from their sources. Synthesizing means combining ideas from various sources to construct your own analysis on a topic. If the student were only to quote from various sources, then the ideas wouldn't be as seamlessly combined. They would just be a series of sound bites. When gathering information from multiple sources, there's bound to be a lot of crossover. So the writer would group sources with similar or related information and paraphrase the sources, showing how main ideas, supporting details, point of view, bias, and misconceptions relate across sources. The writer should only quote from a source when the language they use is particularly powerful or they express an idea in an especially eloquent way.

Check-In

Read the source notes and the two synthesis paragraphs. Then use what you learned about synthesizing multiple sources to complete the activity.

“The Start of the Cold War”

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) website, a .org website

- USSR leader Stalin and U.S. president Truman approach post-WWII Germany opposite ways. Stalin demanded reparations, while Truman offered assistance
- Europe splits between NATO capitalism and Eastern European communism
- All parts of society entrenched in Cold War
- United States pulls ahead of USSR with the detonation of the first atomic weapon in New Mexico

“The Space Race”

Reputable commercial encyclopedia, website ending in .com

- arms race between United States and USSR / nuclear weapons
- The USSR launched *Sputnik*, the world’s first satellite, in 1957
- United States feared power of the missile if used on Earth—responded with own satellite and creation of NASA in 1958

“Soviets and Americans race to the stars” by Maddie Davis

Miller Center website ending in .org, associated with the University of Virginia

- Source focuses on nonpartisan information about U.S. presidents and political history
- United States and USSR wanted proven superiority as only superpower
- Russia at first was winning with *Sputnik 1* and 2, and *Vostok 1*—first person in space and to orbit Earth
- United States “wins” with Apollo 11 lunar landing
- Both countries spent billions to fund space race

“What Was the Space Race?”

National Air and Space Museum website, website ending in .edu

- Source focuses on the space race and the Cold War as well as the modern-day impacts of both.
- USSR led the space race for many years by sending the first satellite and human into space and conducting the first spacewalk.
- The United States took the lead from the USSR by sending the first human to the moon.
- The space race continued past the end of the Cold War as Eastern and Western nations built space stations, systems, and industries.
- To this day, Russia, China, and the United States compete for dominance by searching for ways to disrupt and undermine each other’s space systems and industries.

Paragraph A

After WWII, the United States and the USSR entered the Cold War between West and East, capitalism and communism. According to Public Broadcasting Service's "The Start of the Cold War," the Cold War extended far beyond politics and government. All parts of society were entrenched in Cold War ideologies. Perhaps the aspect most concerning was the arms race between the two countries. The United States had established its military and technological supremacy when it had detonated the first atomic weapon in 1945. For the next decade, the United States led the arms race. But according to a reputable online encyclopedia, in 1957 the U.S.S.R. launched *Sputnik*, the first manmade satellite to orbit Earth. This satellite inspired fear among Americans that the Soviets had the capability to reach the U.S. mainland with their weapons. As a result, space became the next and most important arena of the Cold War. In the article "Soviets and Americans Race to the Stars" from the University of Virginia Miller Center website, Maddie Davis explains that in response to *Sputnik*, the United States established NASA and invested billions of dollars in space travel and exploration. A desperate push for global superiority and ideological dominance gave the space race enough funding to move forward with the proverbial speed of light. And though many including Maddie Davis view the United States's moon landing as the victorious end to the space race, it did not end all competition in space. The National Air and Space Museum cites modern examples of competing for dominance in space. Western and Eastern nations still continually interfere with each other's space systems and industries to gain advantages in space. Without the impetus of the Cold War, space exploration would not be what it is today.

Paragraph B

World War II was a traumatizing event for the entire world. In the aftermath, the East and the West had very different ideas about how to move forward. USSR leader Stalin wanted reparations from Germany, while U.S. President Truman wanted to provide assistance. Countries in Western Europe supported NATO and capitalism and those in the East followed communism. This split led to the Cold War. When the United States detonated the first atomic weapon, the weapon that would essentially end WWII, the United States took the lead in the arms race between East and West.

The United States had the power to wipe out the globe. Over a decade later, with all parts of society entrenched in fear inspired by the Cold War, the USSR took a step ahead with the 1957 launch of *Sputnik*, the first manmade satellite sent into orbit. Then the U.S. founded NASA. The U.S. landed on the moon and won the space race.

Activity

Which paragraph is a more successful synthesis of the sources? Explain your answer using evidence from the paragraphs.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Paragraph A is a more successful synthesis paragraph than Paragraph B. For starters, Paragraph A names four sources: an article from a PBS website, an online encyclopedia, an article from a center affiliated with the University of Virginia, and the National Air and Space Museum. Paragraph B, on the other hand, fails to credit any sources, so the writer is committing plagiarism. Some of the ideas are unique analysis—for example, the idea that “all parts of society” were “entrenched” in the Cold War is a unique way to interpret events, so PBS should have been credited there.

Another problem with Paragraph B is that it doesn’t integrate information as seamlessly as Paragraph A does. It seems choppy in part because it uses fewer transitional words and phrases. Paragraph A, on the other hand, contains lots of transitions to connect ideas, such as “After WWII,” “For the next decade,” “But,” “As a result,” and so on. But the choppieness also results from the fact that Paragraph B doesn’t include enough of the writer’s analysis. Instead, events are listed one after the other, but their significance is not really examined. In addition, there’s an organization problem in Paragraph B: The paragraph discusses the split between East and West that led to the Cold War but then goes on to point out that the U.S. took the lead in the arms race when it detonated the first atomic weapon. The order of those ideas should be reversed.

Paragraph B also fails to discuss the misconception that is revealed in the article from the National Air and Space Museum. Paragraph A examines this misconception, drawing the conclusion that while the space race ended, the moon landing did not end all competition in space. Finally, Paragraph B simply ends with the sentence, “The U.S. landed on the moon and won the space race.” It should instead conclude with the writer’s own analysis or a larger point that the writer wants to make in that paragraph. Paragraph A appropriately ends with this observation, “Without the impetus of the Cold War, space exploration would not be what it is today.”

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Practice

Read the notes taken from sources on the new “space race” between the U.S. and China. Then complete the activity.

“China just opened its very first space station, a ‘heavenly palace’ manned by taikonauts” by Scott Shackelford, Eytan Tepper, and the Conversation, December 9, 2022.

Fortune’s global media magazine, a .com website

- 2022: China opens first space station—”heavenly palace”
- China now holds a stake in space, after the U.S. and Russia
- The U.S. and the Soviet Union developed and launched the International Space Station in the 1990s. Today, the U.S. leads the ISS; it’s scheduled to be decommissioned in 2030.
- The new Chinese space station is 100% managed by the Chinese, but China has invited other countries to conduct research there.
- New space station has shifted “power dynamics in space.”
- China has expressed plans to build a Moon base with Russia.

Associated Press (AP) “A new space race? China adds urgency to US return to moon” by Ellen Knickmeyer, September 15, 2022.

Independent global news agency, a .com website

- The U.S. and China are racing to establish a lunar base
- U.S. military and intelligence leaders warn that China's space program raises strategic challenges for the U.S.; "an echo of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry that prompted the 1960s' race to the moon."
- China is the first country to land on the far side of the moon.
- Relations tense at times; countries accuse each other of "weaponizing space."
- U.S. space leader for 60+ years; uneasy about China taking lead.
- Chinese space program is linked with its military branch.
- Russia has aligned with China's moon program.
- Lunar bases offer strategic opportunities to mine minerals and frozen water on the moon or use the moon as a base for space mining/exploration.
- U.S. has tens of thousands of satellites; they do everything from process credit card purchases to predict the weather to gather military intelligence
- According to Pentagon research, "China appears to be on track to surpass the U.S. as the dominant space power by 2045."

China Daily. "A space race, a new Cold War or a bit of both" By Quentin Parker, September 6, 2022.

Reputable online Chinese news publication, a .com website

- We don't need a new Cold War; we need planetary cooperation to fight "climate emergency"—pool data from satellites monitoring oceans,

landmasses, and ice caps. Use it to build climate models, make predictions.

- China's economy and military have made it a superpower
- China's already winning the science and technology race, earning more patents per year than the U.S. and investing massively in education and R&D.
- Chinese space programs are peaceful and cooperative.
- In 2020, China broke the world record for successful rocket launches.
- China to partner with Russia for missions and bases on the moon.
- In the light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, ties to Russia have caused tension between China and the U.S.
- Parker's opinion: "[A]n internationally competitive space program with China, Europe and the US on podium positions but with India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and some other countries jostling in the pack can foster accelerated technological breakthroughs and promote exciting new developments."

Activity

Use what you learned in this lesson to synthesize the information above and build your own analysis of the topic: the new "space race" between the U.S. and China. Use transitions to show how the sources interact to build to your conclusion.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The opening of China's first space station in fall 2022 may have signaled a new era in space exploration. Since the moon landing in the 1960s, the U.S. has been the leader in space technology. Experts believe that will soon change. In fact, according to Pentagon research, by 2045 China will be the number one superpower in space (Associated Press, 9/15/22). Adding to the prospect of

Chinese supremacy in space is the fact that the U.S.-led International Space Station, constructed in the 1990s, is scheduled to be decommissioned in 2030 (Fortune.com, 12/9/22). This will mean that China will control the only working space station. China's already been winning the science and technology race here on Earth, earning more patents per year than the U.S. and investing massively in science education and research and development (China Daily, 9/6/22). Now China is joining the U.S. in a new race to the Moon. In 2021, China was the first country to land on the far side of the Moon. This was the first major step in China's plan to build a lunar base, a project it hopes to complete with Russia. Having a lunar base will further cement China as a key stakeholder in space exploration. A lunar base would give the Chinese a major strategic edge, allowing them to mine minerals or frozen water and giving them a base for further space exploration (Associated Press). The U.S. is also working to build a base camp on the Moon. So, the race is truly on.

In what the AP's Ellen Knickmeyer describes as "an echo of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry," today's race into space is an extension of the military, economic, technological, and political rivalry between the U.S. and China. Although tensions aren't as high as they were during the Cold War between the Americans and Soviets, U.S. military and intelligence leaders are warning that China's space capabilities are likely to pose "strategic challenges" for the United States (Associated Press, 9/15/22). A Chinese news source echoes the statement made by Chinese officials regarding the peaceful and cooperative nature of their space program (China Daily, 9/6/22). However, other news sources reveal that the Chinese space program has ties with its military branch as well as with warring Russia (Associated Press, 9/15/22). While many in the U.S. see the space race as a cause for concern, others see the potential technological and economic benefits of the competition. Many hope that this space race will promote more international cooperation than the U.S.-Soviet rivalry that propelled the race to the moon in the 1960s. In fact, with many pressing concerns facing our planet in the years to come, we could certainly benefit from the many technological advances that might come

from a mix of collaboration and healthy competition both here on Earth and in space.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I responded to the entire prompt.
 2. _____ I synthesized information from multiple sources.
 3. _____ I demonstrated understanding of the topic.
 4. _____ I drew a unique conclusion based on the information.
-

Presenting

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will determine a presentation type for which the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Key Words

- **audience** – the group of people for whom a text or presentation is intended
 - **presentation types** – the forms in which information is presented to the audience
 - **purpose** – the reason a presentation is given
 - **style** – the way a writer tells a story or presents information; created through the use of word choice, syntax, descriptive techniques, and other literary devices
 - **substance** – the importance or seriousness of information
 - **task** – the type of writing or presentation being produced
-

Presenting

As writers conduct research and develop their work, they also determine how to present it to their audience. Presentation types are the forms in which writers convey their research and findings on a topic. They can include different modes of writing as well as different mediums, such as explanatory essays, speeches, audio presentations, and visual displays. A writer might blend two different mediums to create the best presentation, such as an explanatory essay with a slideshow or a podcast with select pieces of evidence compiled for the learning coach.

To determine a presentation type, a writer decides what is appropriate for the assignment, including the purpose, or the reason a presentation is given; the audience, or the group of people for whom a text or presentation is intended; and the task, or the type of writing or presentation being produced. For example, a writer may want to persuade a general audience and may determine that the best way to do that is with a speech.

The presentation type should follow a specific organization and the development of ideas should highlight the evidence that the writer wants to highlight. In addition, the presentation type should connect with the substance, or the importance or seriousness of the writer's information, and style, or the way a writer tells a story or presents information using word choice, syntax, and other literary devices. Looking at the example from before, the writer may decide to use the speech to persuade an audience to vote a certain way. To accomplish this, the writer may decide to use strong, evocative word choice to emphasize why their topic is so important and why the audience should vote the way the writer suggests.



Source: Rich Carey. Shutterstock

Note how the following writer determines how to present information for a research project on coral reefs. The writer looks at how each element connects to their research in determining a presentation type.

Coral Reefs

- Introduction to coral reef ecosystems
- Description of shallow- and deep-water coral reefs
- Explanation of the ecological benefits of coral reefs
- Explanation of contemporary threats to coral reefs
- Conclusion to recap the importance of coral reefs

Question 1

What might be an appropriate presentation type for the writer's outline?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: An explanatory essay with an accompanying slideshow may be appropriate so that the writer can present the information as well as some maps and photos to give the audience visual context for the topic.

Question 2

Why is it important to keep purpose, audience, and task in mind when determining a presentation type?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: It is important that the presentation type is appropriate to the assignment and for the audience. This includes the level of background and formality of the presentation.

Check-In

As you answer the following questions, recall what you learned about determining a presentation type for which the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.

Question 1

Which presentation type has an organization and development that is most appropriate to the following research assignment?

Purpose: To inform

Audience: General audience without subject matter expertise

Task: Present biographical information for a scientist who has studied coral reefs

- a.** a narrative essay that describes the dangers of coral reef bleaching
- b.** an explanatory essay detailing a scientist's background and their work
- c.** a museum exhibit detailing the geological history of coral reefs on different continents
- d.** a podcast with interviews of people to gauge how top-of-mind coral reefs are in the public today

Reveal Answer

- b.** an explanatory essay detailing a scientist's background and their work

Question 2

How are organization and development related to a writer's determination of an appropriate presentation type?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Writers need to determine how a presentation type will best allow them to organize and develop the pieces of research they have. For example, some material may include more visual elements than others that require explanation.

Question 3

Why are the substance and style of a writer's work important to consider when determining an appropriate presentation type?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Writers need to use a presentation type that is appropriate for the importance or weight of the subject—the substance. They also need to use a presentation type that allows them to use stylistic effects to enhance the overall presentation.

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Practice

Read this outline from a research project and use it to complete the activities.

Research Outline: Civic Action on Coral Reefs

- Introduction to the contemporary issues around coral reef degradation
- Overview of advocacy groups that work on coral reef issues
- Problem-solution description of how advocacy groups support coral reef conservation
- Call to action to write letters to legislators in support of coral reef conservation efforts

Assignment

- **Purpose:** to inform and inspire action
- **Audience:** general audience without subject matter expertise
- **Task:** Present research on an environmental topic and inspire action.

Activity 1

What would be an appropriate presentation type for this outline?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I think that a speech would be appropriate. It would need to include development of ideas in a way that informs the audience and creates a call to action. The best organization may be a problem-solution structure.

Activity 2

Describe how the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to the purpose, audience, and task for the presentation type you chose.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer:

- In the introduction of the speech, the writer can explain the issues around coral reef degradation and advocacy groups that work on those issues.
- The organization of the material would include a problem-solution structure to describe how organizations work on the issue as well as how audience members can help the cause by writing letters.
- The substance of the topic is weighty, so the writer should keep the speech's focus on key ideas about their topic.
- In terms of style, the writer would need to use strong rhetorical appeals to enhance their call to action—though the writer needs to be fair in making claims without relying too much on charged language.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activities by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I chose and explained an appropriate presentation type.
 2. _____ I described how the organization, development, substance, and style would work for the presentation type I chose.
 3. _____ I described how the presentation type related to the purpose, audience, and task in my answer.
-

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning.

Key Words

- **evidence** – the facts and information that support an idea or analysis
 - **reasoning** – the thinking behind the evidence; why the writer believes the evidence supports or proves the claim
-

Presenting

After conducting research on a topic, writers may need to present their ideas in an oral presentation. Writers can do this effectively by presenting their information, findings, and supporting evidence, or facts and information, in a clear, concise, and logical way. Their presentations should be tailored to their audience so that listeners can logically follow the writer's line of reasoning, or the thinking behind their evidence and why the writer believes that the evidence supports their ideas.

One way to create a logical presentation is to use deductive or inductive reasoning. With deductive reasoning, the writer starts with generally accepted ideas and facts and then uses that information to draw a logical conclusion. For example, a writer might begin with a generally accepted idea, such as “Humans need water to live” to argue why humans should protect Earth instead of pursuing space colonization. The writer then includes information about other planets' liquid water supplies and current space technology to illustrate why Earth and its water are important to preserve.

Inductive reasoning is a less concrete form of logic that includes making a prediction. In inductive reasoning, the writer makes a general observation and uses evidence to support that observation. For example, the writer might begin with an observation that “My friends and I enjoy going to the movie theater.” Then, the writer could use their own observations about movie theaters and the experience to make predictions about what new theatrical releases they are most likely to enjoy.



Source: wizdata. Shutterstock

Click on the interactive to see how the writer in this case develops their presentation on the case for the importance of nature in 19th-century American literature. Each pin gives information about an important element of the outline. There are four pins.

Outline

Main idea: Nature forms a key part of 19th century American literature, especially the essays of Henry David Thoreau.

- The first uniquely American literature developed during the Romantic period, the early to mid 1800s, as the nation expanded westward across Indigenous lands.
- The role of nature in young American culture was a topic for writers, especially the Transcendentalists, including Thoreau.

• Thoreau's essays, including in his collection *Walden*, written while he lived in a cabin in the woods, expressed an ideal of living with nature in America.

• Edgar Allan Poe was another important writer of the 1800s, and he presented a darker side of nature through gothic fiction that suggested decay.

- Some people may say that nature is frequently an important part of literature, and while that is often the case, at this time in history it was a particularly weighty topic—as it is today around the discussion on climate change—and Thoreau's writing on nature continues to inspire. For example, Thoreau's writing inspired the modern conservation movement, including the work and writing of John Muir.

Question

Consider how the writer in the hotspot approached their presentation. What technique might you use when preparing your own presentation?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: I like that the writer removed any unnecessary details, so I want to make sure to do that in a future presentation. Research can bring up so much interesting information, but in a presentation, I need to make sure that whatever information I include is clear, concise, and logical so that my audience can understand and follow my presentation.

Check-In

Use what you learned about presenting information, findings, and supporting evidence to answer the following questions.

Question 1

Which set of statements is most logical and well-reasoned?

- a.** Nature as a theme is prevalent in American literature. Thoreau was a nature writer who influenced environmental movements. So, Thoreau made important contributions to American literature.
- b.** Thoreau was a nature writer. Nature is important in American literature. So, Thoreau is an important writer.
- c.** Thoreau is a major author. He also wrote about nature, an important subject in American literature.
- d.** In American literature, writers who convey enduring messages about nature are best remembered.

Reveal Answer

- a.** Nature as a theme is prevalent in American literature. Thoreau was a nature writer who influenced environmental movements. So, Thoreau made important contributions to American literature.

Question 2

How would you revise this paragraph so that listeners could better follow the line of reasoning in an oral presentation? Explain why your revisions improve the paragraph.

So, Thoreau's individual actions led to reverberations across time and place. Civil disobedience is a powerful form of resistance. His actions inspired Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King

Jr. to organize similar nonviolent protests. Thoreau's description of civil disobedience through his experience spending a night in jail for refusing to pay a poll tax in protest of the Mexican-American War and the enslavement of Black Americans shows the power of individual resistance.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Civil disobedience is a powerful form of resistance. Thoreau's description of civil disobedience through his experience spending a night in jail for refusing to pay a poll tax in protest of the Mexican-American War and the enslavement of Black Americans shows the power of individual resistance. His actions inspired Gandhi, Nelson Mandela, and Martin Luther King Jr. to organize similar nonviolent protests. So, Thoreau's individual actions led to reverberations across time and place.

I think my revisions improve the paragraph because now the focus is on civil disobedience, beginning with Thoreau and continuing forward in time. I think this will make for a better, clearer presentation of the information.

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Practice

Read this draft outline and think about how you would orally present the information it contains to a listener. Then, complete the activity.

Information and Findings with Supporting Evidence:

- Thoreau has influenced modern civil rights movements
 - His act of civil disobedience recounted and reflected on in his essay “Civil Disobedience” inspired Gandhi, Mandela, and King Jr.
- Thoreau has influenced modern environmental movements
 - Conservationists like John Muir took inspiration from Thoreau in their 20th and 21st century work.
- Thoreau wrote in *Walden* that “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately.” His mantra of “living deliberately”—with its suggestion to live thoughtfully and guided by one’s conscience—has taken on multiple important meanings in the contemporary world. It has been applied to:
 - The tiny-house and related off-the-grid movement apply Thoreau’s “living deliberately” mantra
 - New age and self-help philosophies

Activity

Present the information in the outline above in a brief oral presentation to your Learning Coach. Begin by determining a main idea and then present the ideas in a clear, well-reasoned, and logical way.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Thoreau has influenced contemporary society in several ways. He wrote in *Walden* that “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately.” His mantra of “living deliberately”—with its suggestion to live thoughtfully and guided by one’s conscience—has taken on multiple, important meanings in the contemporary world. For example, the tiny-house and related off-the-grid movement applies Thoreau’s “living deliberately” mantra. In addition, many new age and self-help philosophies apply Thoreau’s thinking. Thoreau has also influenced the modern civil rights movements. His act of civil disobedience, recounted and reflected on in his essay “Civil Disobedience,” inspired Gandhi, Mandela, and King Jr. Besides his lasting political and philosophical influences, Thoreau has also shaped modern environmental movements. For example, conservationists like John Muir took inspiration from Thoreau in their 20th- and 21st-century work. By inspiring contemporary leaders in civil rights, philosophy, and environmentalism, Thoreau continues to be important today.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I determined a main idea based on the sample information, findings, and supporting evidence.
 2. _____ I organized the information, findings, and supporting evidence into a well-reasoned and logical oral presentation.
 3. _____ I orally presented the ideas to my Learning Coach clearly, concisely, and logically.
-

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will employ effective repetition, rhetorical questions, and delivery style to convey a message that impacts the audience.

Key Words

- **diction** – effective, clear word choice
 - **repetition** – purposeful repeating of a word or statement for emphasis and rhythm
 - **rhetorical device** – the use of language to help a writer achieve a specific purpose
 - **rhetorical question** – a question posed by an author used to emphasize a point
 - **style** – the way a writer tells a story or presents information; created through the adaptation of speech that suits the audience and the use of word choice, syntax, descriptive techniques, and other rhetorical and literary devices
-

Presenting

Interact Effectively With Others

For writers, preparation is critical for creating a powerful presentation. To engage an audience, writers must adapt their speech to the context and to audience members. Writers purposefully use specific techniques to express their message and interact effectively with others.

Writers work with the goal of impacting an audience through their presentations. To begin, writers need to consider the context: a formal presentation will require formal diction, or word choice, whereas an informal presentation will include casual language.

Writers not only consider diction, but they also employ rhetorical devices, or the usage of language to achieve a specific purpose. One effective rhetorical device is repetition. Writers repeat specific words or phrases to emphasize key ideas while creating rhythm to make the speech engaging and easy for the audience to follow. Repetition helps the audience hone in on important ideas. Writers may also use rhetorical questions, or questions that the writer includes to make a point instead of requiring a response.

Aside from evaluating their language, writers also use well-chosen elements of delivery style, or the way they present information to make their points clear and engaging. Elements of delivery style include, but are not limited to:

- Pace – Writers speak with a moderate pace so the audience can understand them clearly, and they pause with intention to highlight certain ideas. Writers may use their punctuation in a presentation script to help them know where to pause or slow down their pace.
- Tone and Volume – Writers modulate their tone and volume to clarify meaning and emphasize important ideas or terms.
- Gestures – Writers use such gestures as raising an arm to emphasize a point.

- Adapting speech — Writers adapt their speech to suit their audience, context, and task. In other words, they consider who their audience is and the situation in which they are speaking, and they deliberately choose to speak using either formal, academic language or informal, colloquial language. The former is appropriate in a formal situation, such as classroom or workplace setting. The latter is appropriate for giving a presentation to one's peers or to a younger audience.



Source: 442570. Shutterstock

See how the writer in this case employs formal language, effective repetition, rhetorical questions, and elements of delivery style in a script for an oral presentation.

Human history, since the time of written records, is a story of conquest—of dominance and subjugation, of survival in spite of insurmountable odds. American history is no different. American history features conquest of not only the land, but of the Indigenous people who inhabited that land. American history features the enslavement of Indigenous peoples and the repugnant trade in human flesh. American history features a war fought—by half of the country—for the right to enslave others. That is the ugly truth of the story of America. But there is another truth too.

American history features curiosity. It features a willingness to risk lives to learn more about our world. American history features bravery in the face of uncharted oceans and wild lands. It features human characters who fled oppression and persecution. American history features great thinkers who founded a country on the principle of equality, an equality we strive for today.

Is it wrong to celebrate the courage of men and women who founded this country? Is it possible to have national pride while acknowledging the horrors of colonization? In order to progress toward a more equitable civilization, we must abandon the space of “either/or” to forge a complete understanding of our history. The founders of America were *neither* “good” *nor* “bad.” They were *both* “good” *and* “bad.” Accepting that fact allows us to see history as a whole from a wide-angle lens—and make the necessary adjustments today to acknowledge the parallel truths of history and move toward the good of equality.

Question 1

What are two examples of repetition and how do they impact the presentation?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The writer repeats “American history” to emphasize the complexity of our history as a country. The writer also repeats the word *equality* because it is a key idea of the discussion of history.

Question 2

How does the author’s use of formal language, diction, and rhetorical devices effectively convey the message and impact an audience?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The author uses comparison and contrast with descriptions such as “dominance and subjugation” and “good and bad.” The author chooses words and phrases that convey strong emotions, such as “insurmountable,” “repugnant trade in human flesh,” “great thinkers,” and “equality.” The author engages the audience and makes a point with the rhetorical questions that begin the third paragraph. The author’s use of formal language implies their respect for their audience and toward their chosen topic.

Choose a topic from the lesson to discuss with your Learning Coach or teacher. Use at least three key words from the lesson in your conversation. As you discuss the topic, share what content you struggled with during the lesson. What did you do that helped you learn it? Also, think about what content you found interesting. Why was it interesting?

Check-In

Read the following paragraph and use what you learned about adapting speech and employing effective repetition, rhetorical questions, and delivery style to answer the questions.

Monuments reflect the values of a society. But what happens when society's values shift? There are still today hundreds of statues and monuments of European explorers who colonized Indigenous Americans, officials who held enslaved Africans, and confederates who seceded from and fought against the United States. Do these markers not undermine the diversity and equality we as Americans strive for today?

Monuments reflect where a nation has been but also where it is going. We need more monuments that show diversity and equality. We need to take note of our monuments and address those that don't align with our ideals—either through removal or through establishing context.

Question 1

What point does the writer emphasize through the use of rhetorical questions? Explain how the writer uses this rhetorical device to engage the audience.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The writer engages the audience with the first rhetorical question to make them think about the shifting values in our society. The writer makes the point through this question that we have changed over the course of our history. The second rhetorical question makes the audience consider the impact of the monuments that still stand today.

Question 2

How might the writer revise the first paragraph to include repetition that emphasizes key points?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: There are still today hundreds of statues and monuments of European explorers who colonized Indigenous Americans. Monuments of officials who held enslaved Africans. Monuments of confederates who seceded from and fought against the United States.

Question 3

How might a writer use techniques of delivery style to impact an audience's reaction? Make suggestions for the second paragraph of the passage.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The writer should pause before the second sentence and then slow the pace and increase volume when reading "diversity and equality." The writer should maintain the use of diction and formal language.

Need a little extra support?

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Practice

Read the notes below and use them with the information in the lesson and Check-In samples to complete the activity.

Claim: Providing context for problematic historical monuments is more effective than removing them.

- Context changes a monument from a celebration of a person's life to an analysis of a person's actions.
- The acknowledgement of misguided societal beliefs of a time along with acknowledgement of the positive and negative influences of memorialized figures can provide validation for marginalized groups.
- George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were enslavers. They also played crucial roles in founding this country on principles that we strive for today. Acknowledging both validates their contribution and validates the experiences of those subjugated by these historical figures.
- Engaging with the complexity of history allows people to learn and to change for the better.
- If monuments are perceived as historical texts, they can become instructive instead of celebratory.

Activity

Use the notes above along with what you have learned in this lesson to develop a brief script for a formal presentation. Add information and ideas as needed. Employ rhetorical devices such as repetition and rhetorical questions and include punctuation and notes for delivery style. Remember,

your goal is to convey a message and impact the audience. Finally, give an oral presentation based on your script to your Learning Coach. Be sure to adapt your speech to make it appropriate for your audience.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: There has been a movement recently to deface and remove national monuments. For some, these monuments serve as icons of racism, oppression, and brutality. Though these descriptions often hold true of the subjects memorialized in bronze, the monuments themselves represent more than their subjects. They are historical texts that instruct Americans on their complex, and sometimes reprehensible, history.

It's natural to want to look away from such atrocities. *Who doesn't? [pause]* But providing context for problematic historical monuments is more effective than removing them from public view. *Context* changes a monument from a celebration of a person's life to an analysis of a person's actions. *Context* acknowledges the contributions of historical figures. *Context* also validates the experiences of people oppressed by those same historical figures. *Context* teaches today's society how to avoid past mistakes by displaying them for all to observe.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I employed effective repetition in my presentation script.
2. _____ I included rhetorical questions in my presentation script.
3. _____ I added punctuation and other delivery style notes to my presentation script.
4. _____ I considered my audience and adapted my speech to suit my specific audience.
5. _____ I conveyed a message that would impact my audience.

Critiquing Presentations

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will evaluate a speaker's reasoning and use of evidence.

Key Words

- **claim** – an argument or assertion that something is true
 - **critique** – make a detailed evaluation
 - **evidence** – the facts and information that support an idea or analysis
 - **purpose** – the reason a presentation is given
 - **reasoning** – the thinking behind the evidence; why the writer believes the evidence supports or proves the claim
-

Critiquing Presentations

Reason Effectively

Communication is a two-way street that includes a transmitter and a receiver; both have to exercise certain skills to communicate successfully. Thus, people should not only know how to give a presentation but also how to listen to one. That means learning to critique presentations: to discern the speaker's intent and evaluate their message.

Examining a Speech

The presentation you will be critiquing is an excerpt from President Barack Obama's Farewell Address. Obama was the 44th President of the United States, entering office in 2009 and serving two full terms. He is known for, among other things, enacting the Affordable Care Act and his campaign motto "Yes We Can." Like many presidents before him, he delivered this farewell speech near the end of his term, on January 10, 2017, ten days before the inauguration of President Donald Trump.

As you read the text or watch the video, take notes about President Obama's purpose and anything you find notable about the speech.

President Obama's Farewell Address



Source: fliegenwulf. Shutterstock

Critiquing Presentations

Evaluating Evidence and Reasoning

The core of critiquing a presentation lies in how well the speaker expresses their purpose, or intent for speaking. Many presentations are either informative or persuasive, so the intent is generally to make and support a claim, or assertion that something is true. Support for a claim comes from evidence—facts and information—as well as reasoning to tie the evidence to the claim.

The effectiveness of a presentation doesn't just come from what is said, but how it's said. Consider the following statements: “blue whales eat tiny creatures called krill,” and “*Balaenoptera musculus*, as a member of the clade Mysticeti, subsists primarily on pelagic microorganisms.” Both statements mean the same thing, however, saying the first statement to an audience of marine biologists might come across as condescending, while saying the second to a group of children would leave them confused. An effective speaker should always consider their audience: What is the audience expecting to hear? How much do they understand the subject? How do they feel about the subject and the speaker? When critiquing a presentation, listeners need to consider the speaker's information and arguments and how they adapt them for maximum effect on the audience.

Rewatch or reread the transcript for the excerpt of President Obama's speech.

Question 1

Who is the audience for President Obama's farewell address?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: President Obama is speaking to his supporters. He emphasizes the young supporters.

Question 2

How does President Obama's claim, evidence, and reasoning appeal to his audience?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: President Obama's claim is that his supporters helped to change the country. His evidence and reasoning include examples of his supporters' beliefs and actions that improved the lives of their fellow Americans. President Obama appeals to his audience by praising their hard work and optimism. He finishes by referencing his familiar campaign slogan—yes we can—to give the audience a sense of hope for the future.

Check-In

Answer the following questions about President Obama's reasoning and use of evidence in other portions of his speech.

Question 1

Read the opening of Obama's Farewell Address:

What does President Obama accomplish by starting the speech this way?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: From context, it is clear that President Obama is speaking in Chicago. Mentioning his ties to the city helps build a connection with the audience, which is likely to include people from the city and surrounding areas.

Need a little extra support?

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Question 2

What is President Obama's claim in the following excerpt? What evidence and reasoning does Obama use to support his claim?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: In this portion of the speech, President Obama's claim is that Americans throughout history have made sacrifices to fight for a better country. His evidence and reasoning include historic examples of people who fought for freedom and a better way of life for themselves and others. This history of accomplishments helps the audience feel empowered to work for change.

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Practice

Read another excerpt from President Obama's speech.

Activity

Identify the main purpose of this portion of the speech and the key claims President Obama is making. What evidence and reasoning does he present to support his claims? Finally, how does his speech relate to what his audience wants or expects?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The main purpose of this part of President Obama's speech is to encourage cooperation and solidarity in the coming years. He claims that America is equipped to handle challenges and supports this with evidence and reasoning about the resiliency and ingenuity of the American people. He claims that disagreement is not a problem with democracy and refers to the founders as examples of cooperation despite disagreement. President Obama mentions some of the difficulties Americans face but uses this to illustrate how important cooperation will be. As for the audience, they are clearly in support of Obama and show dismay at the prospect of transferring power, but by making clear how important it is to honor tradition, he demonstrates the integrity his audience expects.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I identified the purpose of the excerpt.
2. _____ I identified claims made in the speech and evidence and reasoning used to support the claims.

3. _____ I addressed how the speech is appropriate for the intended audience.

4. _____ I used correct grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will evaluate a speaker's point of view and rhetoric.

Key Words

- **point of view** – attitude; the position a speaker takes on an issue; way of looking at things
 - **rhetoric** – the way words are used to persuade others and/or encourage action
-

Critiquing Presentations

Evaluating Point of View and Rhetoric

Critiquing presentations is a useful skill for people of all ages in academic, business, and political contexts. This skill involves evaluating a speaker's message, point of view, and persuasive techniques. The speaker's word choice can indicate what emotions the speaker feels, or what they want the listener to feel. A speaker's point of view is how they see a particular issue: their perspective, beliefs, and intent. An effective speaker should make their point of view clear to the audience, but a good listener should evaluate nuances in the point of view by paying attention to the speaker's rhetoric, or language used to persuade.



Source: jpegwiz. 123RF

Here are some rhetorical techniques speakers often use:

- **Repetition:** Speakers often use repeated words and phrases to emphasize important ideas in a presentation.
- **Evoking the past:** Using historical references is a technique that speakers, especially politicians, often use to persuade listeners about the importance of their ideas.
- **Use of pronouns:** Speakers emphasize certain ideas by their choice of pronouns—using first-person pronouns such as *we* makes the address personal and can create a sense of commonality between the speaker and the audience; using the second-person pronoun *you* allows the speaker to directly address the audience and ask them for action.
- **Figurative language:** Figurative language, or language used in a nonliteral way to achieve an effect, can be used to persuade an audience to think of a

situation in a new way.

Watch the video of two students discussing President Barack Obama's point of view and rhetoric in his farewell address in January 2017.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Now, answer the questions.

Question 1

What is President Obama's point of view in the speech, according to the students?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: President Obama is optimistic about the future because of what the younger generations have accomplished.

Question 2

What are some of the examples of rhetoric the students notice in President Obama's speech?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Obama uses first-person pronouns to make the address personal, and he uses patriotic historic references to gain sympathy.

Check-In

Use what you learned about evaluating a speaker's point of view and rhetoric to answer the following questions.

Question 1

What rhetorical techniques do the following closing lines of a speech include? What effect does this rhetoric have on the speaker's point of view?

Your vote can mean a safer city. Your vote can mean cleaner water. Your vote can mean a better future.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The speaker uses repetition by saying "Your vote" at the beginning of each sentence, which emphasizes the speaker's point of view about the importance of voting. The speaker's use of the second-person pronoun *your* allows them to speak in a direct way to their audience and urge them to take action.

Need a little extra support?

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Question 2

Why might a speaker use the pronoun *we* instead of the pronoun *I*?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The speaker may want to encourage cooperation or a sense of shared values.

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Question 3

Several American leaders have referred to America in speeches as a “shining city on a hill,” a reference to a 17th-century Puritan sermon. What point of view do these speakers have about America? What rhetorical technique conveys this idea?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: The speakers who use this phrase have the point of view that America is a beacon of light and hope for the world. The speakers use the rhetorical technique of figurative language to compare the country in a nonliteral way to a shining city, which emphasizes the special role they feel America has as global leader.

Need a little extra support?

[Get Help Here](#)

Practice

Use what you learned about evaluating a speaker's point of view and rhetoric to complete the following activity.

Activity

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I evaluated a speaker's point of view and rhetoric.
 2. _____ I identified at least one rhetorical device to add to the speech to make it more effective.
 3. _____ I used correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.
-

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will evaluate the style and format of a presentation.

Key Words

- **evaluate** – to assess the strength or effectiveness of something
-

Critiquing Presentations



Source: Rawpixel.com. Shutterstock

In this lesson you'll learn some of the strategies that help make a presentation effective and how to [evaluate](#), or assess the effectiveness of, the style and format of a presentation. Learning how to evaluate a presentation can help writers improve their own presentations.

Features of a Strong Presentation

The style of a presentation refers to the choices a presenter makes in their language and delivery. The format of a presentation refers to how it is structured; it should be organized with a beginning, middle, and end, and with ideas that are logically and smoothly connected.

Question 1

Compare the structure of presentation to a research paper. How are they similar?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Both a presentation and a research paper should have an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

The presenter should speak clearly and at a speed and volume sufficient to be easily understood. A presenter who mumbles incoherently, speaks too softly, or talks so quickly that the words are difficult to discern will likely lose their audience's attention. As a general rule, audience members will not be willing to put in the effort to understand a presenter who cannot be easily understood. A speaker might have funny stories to tell, interesting experiences to relate, or compelling ideas to share, but if the audience cannot make out what the presenter is saying, all that effort will have been wasted. One goal of an effective presentation, then, should be to ensure that the audience can understand the presenter.

Projecting a sense of confidence should be a related goal of every presenter. The speaker's voice should be commanding, not tentative. You may have heard speakers who seem to turn every declarative sentence into a question. That may be acceptable in ordinary speech, but it's less than ideal for a presentation. A speaker should present themselves as an expert in the topic they are presenting.

Question 2

Why is it important for a speaker to present themselves as knowledgeable on their topic?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: It will help gain the audience's trust.

It's also important for presenters to engage with their audience. That may mean making eye contact if the presentation is live or looking into the camera if the presentation is being recorded. Presenters often can pick up on the energy of a live audience and add to it, which typically improves their effectiveness. The contrast between a presenter who is in tune with an audience and one who barely looks up from a prepared script is noticeable.

Using Digital Media

While not all presentations have digital media, such as graphs, charts, maps, photos, video, and music, many do. Presenters should choose media carefully, so that each element packs an optimal punch. It's important that visuals are "decodable." In other words, audience members should be able to comprehend the information or message an image is communicating. An image that is too tiny to be easily identified is the visual equivalent of a speaker who doesn't speak loudly enough to be heard. A similar idea applies to audio. Audience members should be able to hear and understand audio components.

Visuals can't be too complicated. It's fine for a presenter to show a general map of a city with blocks tapped for revitalization highlighted. However, a presenter would likely want to refrain from showing a highly detailed map that identifies the location of every significant building along with the name of the owner, the date it was constructed, and the most recent purchase price. An image that requires more than a few seconds to understand is probably too complicated to include in the average presentation.

Lastly, the connection between digital media and the content should be clear and in line with the style of the presentation. For example, in a presentation about classical music, it would be inappropriate for the presenter to play their favorite folk song simply because they like it.

Critiquing Presentations

Evaluating an Example

President Barack Obama, who served from 2009 to 2017, is often referred to as one of the most lauded public speakers of our time. In 2017, Obama gave a farewell address in Chicago to mark the end of his presidency. Watch the end of the speech.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Kamala Harris Accepts Vice President Nomination Transcript

One aspect of Obama's speech that you might have noticed right away involves the interplay between Obama and his audience. The audience is enthusiastic, often interrupting the speech with applause or joyful shouts to signal approval of what Obama is saying. Obama, in turn, pauses and addresses his listeners directly; you may have noticed the prevalence of the word *you*. Obama looks in various directions as he speaks, rather than staring into one area for the duration of the speech. The result is an energetic presentation and experience for the audience.

In addition, you may have noticed what Obama does with his hands while he speaks. He uses gestures to punctuate his points. On the word *inspired*, for example, Obama briefly clenches his fists, emphasizing the importance of the word. Likewise, he gestures to the audience with important phrases, such as *I see you in every corner of the country*.

Question 1

What is one way Obama's gestures affect the audience?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: They make the audience feel as if they are part of the presentation.

Obama's speaking voice is consistently strong, loud, and clear. At times, he drops his volume and pitch; this variation can be a good strategy to keep the audience engaged, as long as it is not overused. Obama speaks confidently, using declarative sentences.

Question 2

What is one advantage of giving a presentation in front of a live audience?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: It's possible for the presenter to play off the audience, responding to cues from the audience. The energy between the presenter and audience members can help make the presentation a more exciting or interesting experience for everyone.

Check-In

Watch a different excerpt from Obama's farewell speech in 2017; this excerpt is near the end of the speech. Then, use what you learned about evaluating the style and format of a presentation to complete the activity.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Kamala Harris Accepts Vice President Nomination Transcript

Activity

Evaluate the excerpt of Obama's presentation. What makes it effective?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: As Obama lists different places across the country where he's spoken with ordinary Americans, he speaks slowly, allowing the audience to connect with the scenes he's describing. He uses repetition in "kept me honest, kept me inspired, kept me going" along with hand gestures to emphasize the positive effect that the American people have had on him. When he says, "You made me a better president, and you made me a better man," he speaks directly to the audience, engaging them in this personal reflection. At this point of the speech, he also allows some emotion to come into his voice, which adds to the power of the moment.

Need a little extra support?

[Get Help Here](#)

Practice

Review both excerpts from Obama's speech.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Kamala Harris accepts the nomination to run for vice president of the United States Transcript

Activity

Now imagine that digital media was added to the speech. If you were evaluating the effectiveness of the digital media, what would you be looking for? Give examples of digital media that would and wouldn't be an effective addition to Obama's farewell speech.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Obama's interplay with the audience is strong. He addresses them directly and discusses their impact on his success and development as a president. During this part of the speech, it could be effective to show live footage of audience members listening to his speech. This would draw a direct connection to the ideas Obama is discussing. When he lists different places across the country where he's spoken with ordinary Americans, it could be effective to show photos of some of those memories. Key words from his speech, such as "inspired," could be shown as textual media, creating emphasis. For all of these examples to be effective, they would need to be visually clear enough for the audience to quickly understand them. Audio wouldn't be effective because it would overpower the most important element of the presentation: Obama's speech.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I gave examples of digital media that would and would not be effective in Obama's speech.
 2. _____ I evaluated their effectiveness and explained my reasoning.
-

Research Portfolio 1

Research Portfolio 1



Writers research for many reasons, but in general, research allows writers to deeply explore a topic they want to understand. A research project is an opportunity to share your research with others in a thoughtful way. It often includes a written portion that

explains in detail the topic of the research. The project might also include a presentation featuring an audiovisual component.

In this portfolio, you will write a research paper and create a slideshow presentation in response to this prompt:

Write a research paper about an event and the questions it provokes, and then use the information in the research paper to create a slideshow presentation.

Portfolio Introduction

Over the next three lessons, you will write a Research Portfolio. You will have three days to address the learning goals and complete the portfolio.

Type of Writing Definition

A research project is an opportunity to share information gathered about a topic in a deliberate, thoughtful way. A research project should both present ideas clearly and give credit to the source of ideas.

Portfolio Topic

Write a research paper about an event and the questions it provokes, and then use the information in the research paper to create a slideshow presentation.

Planning Document

Download the following document to your computer. Use this document to plan your portfolio.

Research Text Planner

Rubric

Use this rubric to ensure you are meeting all the goals of the portfolio.

Research and Presentation Portfolio Rubric

Example Portfolio

Use this example of a completed portfolio as a guide for your writing. The portfolio topic this student chose was: How did thieves pull off the art theft at the Gardner Museum

and what became of the missing art?

Unsolved: Mrs. Gardner's Missing Masterpieces

Research Portfolio 1 Continued

View the flipbook for some ideas on approaching this prompt.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

A Noteworthy Event Transcript

The lessons in this portfolio will support you as you plan, research, write, and revise your research paper and presentation. They will help you make choices about how to develop your project to effectively convey the findings from your research.

As you create your research project, you will also examine the process of another student, Anton Middleton, as he worked on his own project. Read Anton's research paper now and think about how he presents his research effectively and keeps you, the reader, interested in his topic.

Pro Tip

Throughout this portfolio, you'll be learning more about specific ways in which Anton approached the process of conducting a research project. You may want to download his research paper to your desktop, tablet, or phone or print it out so that you can take notes or highlight portions that help you understand a specific element or technique.

Unsolved: Mrs. Gardner's Missing Masterpieces

by Anton Middleton

The night of March 18, 1990, was the end of St. Patrick's Day, a huge holiday in Boston and its largely Irish neighborhood, South Boston. Around the city, people were celebrating. However, two men sitting in a hatchback car outside of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum were quite serious. Although they were dressed as police, they were really art thieves. On that night, they pulled off the largest art theft in United States history (Halpern). The paintings they stole were worth \$200 million at the time but now would be valued at half a billion dollars (Mahony "Gone but not forgotten").

Investigators have hunted for the artworks for more than three decades, but none of the items stolen have been recovered. This paper will explore how two men on a Sunday night in Boston accomplished the greatest unsolved crime in U.S. history and what became of the missing masterpieces.

The Museum

The museum that was robbed that night was not a typical art museum. Essentially created as a home with a massive art collection on the lower floors, the museum had been built by Isabella Stewart Gardner. Daughter of a wealthy New York businessman, she married John Gardner in 1860. Gardner's family was one of Boston's most prominent, and the society elite of Boston was not particularly welcoming to her. Ten years into their marriage, Isabella went to Europe to recover from illness. There, she found her passion—art, both visual and performing (Britannica).

She returned to Boston a new woman. Not only did she throw social affairs that were dazzling to the conservative Boston elite; she also became a supporter of the Boston Symphony and many music students, and she began to collect art (Britannica).

Together, the wealthy couple traveled to Europe and Asia, buying paintings and other art objects (Britannica). After Isabella's father died in 1891, he left her an inheritance of about \$1.7 million ("Building Isabella's Museum"), and she decided to increase the size of her art collection with the money. The Gardners soon realized that the collection had grown too large for their home and began searching for a solution, originally considering an addition to their house, but eventually deciding that a separate building, with living space upstairs, was the best solution. John began looking around for a suitable site for this new building that would showcase the treasures that he and Isabella had brought home from around the world ("Building Isabella's Museum").

Before they found the ideal site, John died in 1898. Isabella carried out their plan, purchasing land and overseeing the construction, and in 1902 she moved in. She arranged her collection on the first three floors of the building ("Building Isabella's Museum").

Although she added to the collection and rearranged the displays throughout her life, Isabella specified that, upon her death, no more changes could be made; not a

single piece of artwork could be added, removed, or sold, and if it were, the entire collection should be transported to Paris and sold at auction with the proceeds going to Harvard University (“They Looked Like Cops”). Without any heirs when she died in 1924, she left the museum to the city of Boston, and it was overseen by a board of trustees made up of some of the city’s leading society figures. However, because they knew little of fundraising or good business practices, the trustees kept to Isabella’s wishes as the money she had left for the museum’s upkeep continued to decline (“They Looked Like Cops”). Eventually, this lack of funding for upgrades and maintenance made the museum particularly vulnerable to thieves (McGreevy).

The Heist

The Gardner’s security force at the time consisted primarily of young people in their 20s, many of them students at nearby colleges, or retirees. In addition to human security guards, the museum had motion detectors in each gallery, but the only camera that recorded activity was at the guards’ desk, and it fed images to a VCR recorder in the safety office (“They Looked Like Cops”).

On that St. Patrick’s Day, two security guards arrived for their night shift at 11:30 p.m. Rick Abeth was a regular night-shift guard, but the other guard, Randy Hestend, was filling in for a coworker who had called in sick. Hestend stayed at the security desk while Abeth did his first rounds. The rounds took the 23-year-old guard throughout the dark building. The whole patrol took an hour and a half, and when Abeth returned, the men switched places and Hestend went off on his rounds. While alone at the desk, Abeth heard the entrance door buzzer. When he answered the buzz, a man’s voice said they were Boston police officers responding to a report of a disturbance. Abeth buzzed them in (“They Looked Like Cops”).

One officer asked if Abeth was alone. When he said no, they asked him to recall the other guard. One officer told Abeth that he looked familiar and suggested there was a warrant out for his arrest. When the officer told him to step from behind the desk, Abeth obeyed, moving away from the security panic button that would have let him summon help. The officer handcuffed Abeth and Hestend, as well, when he returned (“They Looked Like Cops”).

Then, one of the officers said, “Gentlemen, this is a robbery.”

Then, the robbers got to work. Unlike most art thieves, who spend just moments stealing their prizes, the two thieves took their time. They removed several paintings from their frames; they cut two Rembrandts out of their frames, as well, and pried an ancient Chinese vessel from its metal base. They made two trips to their car with the items (Kurkjian 25; Boser 9). Just 81 minutes after they had entered, the thieves left the museum (“The Theft”).

In addition to a Napoleonic bronze eagle finial and the Chinese vessel, they escaped with the following art:

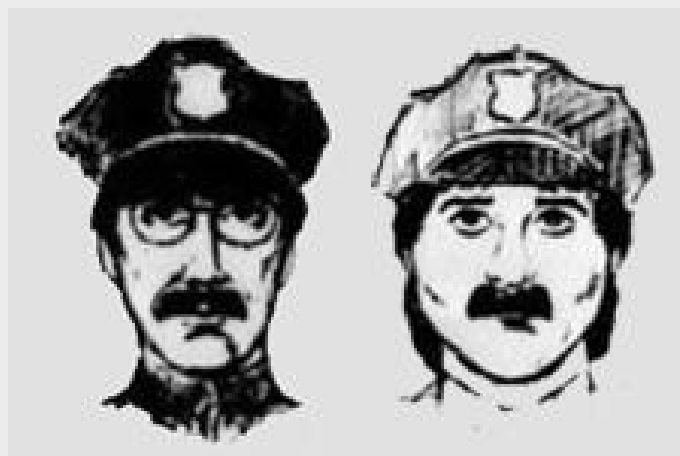
- *The Concert*, one of 32 works by the Dutch master Vermeer known to exist
- *Storm on the Sea of Galilee*, Rembrandt’s only seascape
- *A Lady and Gentleman in Black*, by Rembrandt
- *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, also by Rembrandt
- *Landscape with an Obelisk*, by Govaert Flinck
- *Three Mounted Jockeys*, by Edgar Degas
- *Leaving the Paddock*, by Degas
- *Procession on a Road Near Florence*, by Degas
- *Study for the Programme*, two sketches by Degas
- *Chez Tortoni* by Edouard Manet (“The Theft”)

Later on, arriving for their shift, the day guards got no response from the night shift team. They called the security manager. After the manager arrived and unlocked the door, he and the day-shift guards were surprised to find neither night guard at the desk, and so they moved further into the building. They discovered the security office door smashed in, and inside, a small picture frame lay on one of the chairs in the office, and a crowbar was on the floor. The frame would turn out to be the one

that had held *Chez Tortoni*. Realizing that something was terribly wrong, the manager called the police (“They Looked Like Cops”).

The Investigation

At the time of the Gardner robbery, crime in the United States was at an all-time high. Violent crimes had risen to 5,802 per 100,000, up from 5,224 per 100,000 five years earlier (University at Albany). DNA analysis was not part of the law enforcement crime scene investigation at the time, so any forensic evidence could not have been analyzed. When the FBI arrived, the Boston police had disrupted the crime scene (“They Looked Like Cops”).



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation

Police sketches of the two robbers who were disguised as police officers. Source:
By Federal Bureau of Investigation - Public Domain

The police had, however, found the two guards in the basement of the museum. Abeth was considered a suspect because he had let the robbers into the building. Questions still linger about some of his actions that night, including why he opened and closed a door to the outside, and why the motion sensors recorded only him, and not the thieves, entering the Blue Room, where the Degas drawings and the finial were. However, he is no longer considered a person of interest (McGreevey).

In Boston during the late 20th century, police thought of one person when a piece of art went missing. That person was Myles Connor, described by Boston Globe reporter Shelly Murphy as “a quintessential art thief.” Although he admits to more than 30 thefts, including stealing a Rembrandt from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Connor had an airtight alibi at the time of the Gardner heist (“They Looked Like Cops”).

Theories and tips proliferated, especially after the museum offered a million-dollar reward for the return of the artworks. The museum did not actually have a million dollars to put up; instead, the trustees appealed to the heads of the Sotheby’s and Christie’s auction houses for the money. In fact, the stolen works were not even insured because the museum could not afford the \$3 million the policy would have cost (Boser, 84). The reward prompted thousands of tips, each of which had to be followed up by law enforcement (“New Development”).

The investigators had very little to go on. The robbers had been disguised. Some of their actions made little sense; for example, why spend time and effort removing the tiny Rembrandt self-portrait from its frame, although it was small enough to fit into a coat pocket, as well as taking *Chez Tortoni* from its frame and leaving it on a chair? (Suddath). And for art experts, the stolen paintings themselves are a puzzle. While the Vermeer and the *Storm on the Sea of Galilee* were each special in their

own way, they were not the most valuable paintings in the museum—that honor belonged to another painting on a different floor (McGreevey).

Mystery Deepens

Some speculated that organized crime had taken the paintings because stolen art can be offered as a bargaining chip to lessen a prisoner's sentence ("They Looked Like Cops"). Connor suggested to the FBI that a friend of his had been involved. Another informant said that five men had been involved, hired by a powerful figure to get certain artworks; however, they missed two items, and the deal soured. In 2013, the FBI announced that they had identified the two men who had robbed the museum, and yet they declined to name the men because they were both deceased; however, two years later the two men were identified as George Reissfelder and Leonard DiMuzio (Cascone).

In 2010, an anonymous tip to investigators said that, in the days before his death, a man named Jimmy Marks, who was known as a "wheeler and dealer," had been boasting about getting some of the art from the robbery (Mahony "Gone but not forgotten") and hiding it inside his apartment. The FBI searched the building but found nothing (Sudborough). Marks's boasting may have been bragging with no truth—and no art—behind it. However, it did confirm investigators' suspicions about who ended up with the artworks—Robert Guarente and Robert Gentile (Mahony "Gone but not forgotten").

Guarente and Gentile had known each other since the 1970s. Six years after Guarente died in 2004, his widow Elene told the FBI that her husband had had two of the Gardner paintings (Mahony "Gone but not forgotten") and she had seen him give them to Gentile outside of a Portland, Maine, hotel (Solly). The FBI became very interested in Gentile after that, searching his home in Manchester, Connecticut, four separate times (Mahony "Convicted Gangster"). In the first search, in 2012, agents found items including police hats, badges, \$20,000 cash in a grandfather clock—and a list of the art stolen from the Gardner Museum; along with the artworks were listed possible prices on the black market (Solly).

In 2016, an associate of Gentile's, Sebastian Mozzicato, said that Gentile had access to the stolen paintings since the late 1990s. However, an effort to record Gentile discussing the possible sale of some stolen paintings failed when Gentile became suspicious of Mozzicato, who was working with the FBI (Solly).

Gentile maintained his innocence, despite a spectacular failure of a polygraph test that maintained there was a 99.9 percent chance that he was lying. (Mahony "Convicted Gangster"). He died in 2021, never telling what he knew, if anything (Mahony "Gone but not forgotten").

Despite the museum's offer of a \$10 million reward for their return, there has been no sign of the paintings, the Chinese vessel, or the finial. The statute of limitations has run out on the theft, so if there is anyone still alive who was involved in the crime, they could not be prosecuted (McGreevey).

Conclusion

To this day, the frames of the stolen artworks hang empty on the walls of the Gardner Museum. Will they ever be filled? If they are to be, it seems that many more questions need to be answered first. Why these artworks? Was organized crime really involved? If so, why? The paintings are too famous to resell, and their fame also makes displaying them publicly difficult (McGreevey).

Perhaps someday a descendant of one of the people involved will open a trunk and within it, find a staggering treasure—all the Degas works, perhaps, or the Vermeer, or a Rembrandt. Perhaps one day Mrs. Gardner's long-lost masterpieces will make it back to Boston and return to the empty frames that are waiting for them.

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Activity 1

Rate Anton's research paper by giving it one, two, or three stars (1 star = Meh; 2 stars = Pretty good; 3 stars = Awesome!) Then, write one or two sentences that explain your rating.

Using the Research and Presentation Portfolio Rubric

There's so much to consider as you plan, write, revise, and edit a research paper and slideshow presentation. You might wonder, "How do I even get started?" The portfolio rubric, or checklist, will guide you through the process by helping you make sure your research paper and slideshow presentation have all the elements necessary for sharing your findings with your audience.

Research and Presentation Portfolio Rubric

Activity 2

Tell one specific way you will use the rubric as you develop your research project.

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will formulate a plan for engaging in research on a complex, multifaceted topic.

Key Words

- **reliable source** – a source that provides credible information based on strong evidence
 - **research question** – an inquiry that can be answered through study and investigation
 - **thesis statement** – a concise summary of the central idea of a text
-

Research Portfolio 1

When taking on a big new project, what's the best way to begin? Most writers don't just sit down and create a polished project. There are several steps to follow. Creating a research plan is the first step. A research plan may include:

- the research topic, or subject of the text
- the research question, or what inquiry you will make about the topic or what problem you will solve
- the subtopics, or topics within the general topic that you will research to answer your research question
- credible or reliable sources, including both print and digital sources

Identifying and Refining a Research Topic

Say you're curious about what the weather will be like tomorrow. In a few seconds, you can look up the answer. A successful research topic, however, does not have a simple answer that readers can quickly discover for themselves. A complex, multifaceted topic requires a variety of sources to get a full picture.

Let's revisit the prompt for your research project:

Write a research paper about an event and the questions it provokes, and then use the information in the research paper to create a slideshow presentation.

Your research project is about an event and the questions it provokes. From the prompt, you know that your topic will be an event. You will need to choose what event you want to focus on and decide what you want to know about it, and in turn, what you want your readers to learn about it.

When Anton began his project, he knew that he wanted to tell readers about the South Boston art heist. Yet, he also knew that topic was broad. There were so many directions

he could go. For example, he could compare the heist to similar events, evaluate different art venues or collectors of Boston, describe art crime investigations, or dive into the meaning of the lost art pieces. Anton knew that he needed to refine his topic. Refining a topic means narrowing it down. Ways to refine a topic include:

- limit the time period under investigation
- use a specific or limited location
- study one part of a population or group
- focus on one perspective or aspect of an issue

Forming a Research Question and Writing a Thesis Statement

A research question is what drives a writer's research on a particular topic, helping the writer focus on what they want to understand about their topic. It's a question that requires books, online sources, and other resources to answer. It also must be able to be answered within the scope of the text. Anton narrowed his research question to: How did thieves pull off the art theft at the Gardner Museum and what became of the missing art? He used this question to guide his research.

Once a writer knows what they want to research, they can write a [thesis statement](#) that summarizes the central idea of the text; the thesis statement tells readers what the topic is and what the text will cover. The thesis statement a writer composes during the planning stage of their work is likely not the same thesis statement they will use in the final draft of their text. The thesis statement often changes as the writer gathers more information from their research or as they draft their text.

As you watch the following video, observe how Anton formulated a research plan.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Question 1

How did Anton break down the main steps of his research plan?

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: First, Anton came up with a topic. Then, he wrote a thesis statement. He limited his research by identifying subtopics that would serve as sections of the research. Finally, he began researching each subtopic, using reliable print and digital sources.

Question 2

Why did Anton create subtopics?

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: They allow him to break down his research into more focused categories.

Research Portfolio 1



Source: Branislav Nenin. Shutterstock

Considering Sources

Research papers should use a variety of credible print and digital sources, including books, articles, interviews, documentaries, government websites, websites of reputable encyclopedias or organizations, and reputable news sites and magazines. Print sources often have a longer vetting process for accuracy than online sources, while online sources may contain more recent information. Whatever the type of source, it is

important to look for fact-checked, trustworthy sources by credible authors and publishers.

Anton's paper is about an event that occurred in 1990. Enough time had passed that Anton figured he would be able to search at his library for well-researched books about the topic by reputable authors. The heist had been a newsworthy event, so he knew there would be articles and reports about the event and its investigation. Trusted online news sources were also on his research list.

Like Anton, your research plan should include a list of reliable sources that you plan to use. As you find sources, you need to determine their reliability. To check whether a source is reliable, consider questions such as these:

- Who is the author? Does the author possess knowledge and expertise on the topic or issue?
- Does the information appear to be well researched? Does the author include their sources?
- Does the author show bias?
- When was the source created or updated? Is there more recent information?
- Who is the publisher? Does the publisher have a reputation for publishing well-sourced information?

Question

Why should writers find a variety of reliable sources?

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: Writers want to make sure their research is accurate and based on evidence. A variety of sources ensures both vetted and up-to-date information as well as a variety of perspectives.

Check-In

Anton created a research plan.

Research Text Planner Answers

Read the beginning of Anton's research plan and then answer the questions.

Research topic: the 1990 unsolved art theft in South Boston

Research question: How did thieves pull off the art theft at the Gardner Museum and what became of the missing art?

Thesis statement: Two men on a Sunday night in Boston in 1990, accomplished one of the greatest unsolved crimes in U.S. history; what became of the missing masterpieces remains a mystery.

Sections/Subtopics:

- Introduction
- About the Museum
- About the Heist
- About the Investigation
- About the Unsolved Mystery
- Observations and Conclusions

Question 1

Explain how Anton's plan helped him begin his project.

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: Anton's research plan helped him focus on what he wanted to uncover in his research. The plan has a clear research question and thesis statement, as well as ideas for the subtopics.

Question 2

What else should be included in Anton's research plan?

Reveal Answer

Hide Answer

Sample answer: His plan should also include ideas for sources.

Need a little extra support?

[Get Help Here](#)

Practice

Activity

It's time to create your own research plan about an event and the questions it provokes. You will fill in the "Research Plan" section of the Research Text Planner to help you organize your thoughts.

Research Text Planner

Follow these steps.

- 1.** Consider possible topics and choose one for your project. Remember your topic should be complex and multifaceted.
- 2.** Write a research question. Your research question should be answerable through study and investigation. If your question can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no," go back to the drawing board.

3. Draft a thesis statement. Ask yourself: What do I want readers to learn about this topic? What will my text cover?
4. Determine subtopics, or what to focus on in different sections of the paper.
5. Come up with ideas for sources. Remember to consider a variety of sources.
6. Begin your research. Use your plan to gather information for each subsection of your paper.
7. You will need to cite your sources, so note the reliable print and digital sources you find. Check in with your Learning Coach about what style they would like you to use for citations.

Pro Tip

If you are having trouble deciding whether you have gathered sufficient research to support your thesis statement, then read through your research plan as if you are someone who is completely unfamiliar with the topic. Are there any questions you might want answered about the event? Is there anything that might be confusing about the event for readers? If so, look for information that would support reader comprehension and support your thesis statement.

Need a little extra support? Take a look at Anton's completed planner and think about how it helped him plan his research text.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I identified and refined a research topic.
 2. _____ I created a research plan.
 3. _____ I drafted a research question and a thesis statement.
 4. _____ I determined subtopics.
 5. _____ I came up with sources.
-

Now, review the full Research and Presentation Portfolio rubric to prepare for what you will do next.

Research and Presentation Portfolio Rubric

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will conduct a research project to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem.

Key Words

- **outline** – a plan a writer uses to organize ideas before writing a text
-

Research Portfolio 1



Source: Jacob Lund. Shutterstock

Researching and Taking Notes

Now that you've created your research plan, what happens next? You already learned that a research project should answer a question, or solve a problem, about a specific topic. To answer the research question, you will gather evidence from reliable sources. So, now it's time to research and take notes about what you learn.

Advanced Online Searches

Your initial research is likely to be broad as you look online for general information about your chosen topic. Doing so helps you determine whether or not your research plan is on-target. You may discover that you need to narrow, broaden, or redirect your focus. When you are ready to find the information you need to gather evidence, you should do advanced online searches. Advanced searches involve using filters and key words to find exactly the information you need about your topic.

You can implement an advanced search on any search engine, although each is designed slightly differently. On some, you start the process by accessing the settings and selecting “Advanced Search.” Doing so will send you to a screen with a variety of search options that will make your choice of key search terms more effective. For instance, you may choose to search for “all of these words,” “this exact word or phrase,” “any of these words” and also by ranges of numbers or dates. You may also narrow your search results by language, region of the world, when the source was posted, and type of domain (*edu*, *com*, *org*, *gov*). Finally, you can select what format or kind of file you are looking for—image, video, pdf, word processing file, and so on.

For most search engines, you can also do advanced searches simply by embedding commands with your key terms in the search bar. For example, if you wish to find sources using your exact words, place them inside quotation marks: “*tropical rainforest rare plants*”. If you want results that reflect any of your key words, add the word “or” between each term: *tropical or rainforest or rare plants*. If you want to indicate the domain, type in the word *site* followed by a colon and the domain type before your key words: *site:gov current U.S. population*.

Question

How can an advanced search help you?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: An advanced search can help me find specific information and evidence to answer my research question.

Taking Notes on Your Research

So, now that you have found appropriate and reliable sources after doing advanced online searches, it's time to research and take notes about what you learn.

As you go through your sources, note relevant information that you find. Here are two options for note taking:

- 1. Paraphrase: When you paraphrase, you write information in your own words. The easiest way to do that is to read a paragraph or chunk of text, then jot down notes from memory in your own words. Write bullet points rather than complete sentences. Note the source that you are paraphrasing from.
- 2. Quote: When you quote from a source, you copy the exact words from the source. Be sure to write down the name of the person you are quoting.

You may wish to use a chart like this to gather your notes:

Research Question with Sources and Notes	
RESEARCH QUESTION	
SOURCE	NOTES

--	--

Creating an Outline

As you dig deeper into your research, you may wonder how you will present the information you're finding to readers. This is where an outline comes in. An outline is a written plan for writing; it presents information in a linear way. It's especially useful in showing the hierarchy of ideas—or how supporting ideas are nested, or indented, under bigger ideas. Structure your outline the way you plan to structure your text, with an introduction, body, and conclusion:

- **Introduction:** The introduction should state your research question or problem and your thesis statement. In your outline, note any necessary background information.
- **Body:** In the body of your text, you will discuss each of your subtopics. In your outline, take note of your main ideas and the evidence that supports each idea.
- **Conclusion:** The conclusion should restate the thesis statement. In your outline, note any insights that will bring the discussion to a close.

Question

What purpose does an outline serve?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: An outline helps writers organize their ideas for the introduction, body, and conclusion of their text.

Check-In

Read the outline Anton made while planning his research project. Notice that next to his evidence, he included in parentheses the source's author or the start of the source's title. Then, complete the activity.

Title: Unsolved: Mrs. Gardner's Missing Masterpieces

Thesis statement: Two men on a Sunday night in Boston in 1990 accomplished one of the greatest unsolved crimes in U.S. history; what became of the missing masterpieces remains a mystery.

I. Introduction

- A. Introduce what the event was and when it happened (Halpern; Mahony "Gone but not forgotten")
- B. State research question/thesis statement

II. Body

A. The Museum

1. Provide background on why the museum existed (Britannica; "Building Isabella's Museum")
2. Explain why the museum may have been targeted ("They Looked Like Cops"; McGreevy)

B. The Heist

1. Describe night of heist: who was working, how the thieves entered the building ("They Looked Like Cops")
2. List what was stolen ("The Theft")
3. Explain how the thieves were able to steal so many items (Kurkjian; Boser)

C. The Investigation

- 1.** Explain crime investigation technology of the time (“They Looked Like Cops”)
- 2.** Discuss what the investigation uncovered and what is still unknown (“They Looked Like Cops”; Boser; “New Development”)

D. Mystery Deepens

- 1.** Examine later theories about who was involved in the robbery (“They Looked Like Cops”; Cascone)
- 2.** Describe later efforts to recover the art by FBI and by the museum (Mahony “Gone but not forgotten”; Solly; Mahony “Convicted Gangster”)

III. Conclusion

- A.** Restate thesis statement and provide final observations about the heist
- B.** Suggest remaining questions about the event

Activity

Explain how Anton’s outline likely helped him begin writing his research paper.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Anton’s outline helped him plan the order of his important points. Each section of the outline provided Anton with a rough guideline for what the text should cover. He included notes about his sources so he could easily reference them as he wrote. His outline also helped him determine if he had enough evidence to support his thesis statement.

Need a little extra support?

[Get Help Here](#)

Practice

Activity

Start the next step of your research project: conducting and organizing your research. Try using the advanced search techniques you learned about to find information related to your topic and research question. As you research, take notes using a graphic organizer or note-taking system that works best for you. Then, either organize the information you gather about your topic in your planner or create an outline in a separate document.

Keep in mind that your outline should include:

- a thesis statement
- ideas for your introduction and conclusion
- the main ideas of each body paragraph
- evidence to support each of your points

Pro Tip

Are you having trouble deciding on the best way to arrange your ideas? Try writing each main idea on its own sticky note. Then, arrange the sticky notes in different ways. Play around with different orders of body paragraphs. Notice how changing the order of different ideas affects how a reader would experience the discussion of the research question.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I conducted research by doing advanced online searches to find information that will help me answer my research question.
 2. _____ I used credible and relevant print and digital sources.
 3. _____ I used my planner or created an outline to organize information and evidence from my sources.
 4. _____ In my outline, I included ideas for the introduction, body, and conclusion.
 5. _____ In my outline, I included evidence and sources.
-

Now, review the full Research Portfolio Rubric to prepare for what you will do next.

Research and Presentation Portfolio Rubric

Research Portfolio 2

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will critique the research process at each step to implement changes as the need occurs and is identified.

Key Words

- **citation** – a reference to a source used to inform a piece of writing
 - **paraphrase** – to rewrite something in your own words
 - **quote** – to repeat what someone has said, word for word
 - **summarize** – to condense a text into its main points using your own words
-

Research Portfolio 2

Critiquing your research process is an important step in ensuring that you have gathered the evidence you need to support your thesis statement and that you have organized it appropriately. At this point in your project, it's time to pause, evaluate the work you've done so far, and get ready for the next big step in your project—writing your research paper.

Evaluating Sources

One part of critiquing your research process is verifying that you have found a variety of sources that are both relevant and credible. Anton's research started with just one source—the documentary about the heist. One source is not enough for a research paper, so he looked for more sources, using targeted search words, such as Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and the names of the security guards, Rick Abeth and Randy Hestend. Anton evaluated each additional source he found. He checked publication dates and researched the credibility of the authors and publishers. For example, one of Anton's potential sources had an anonymous author, so he ultimately decided not to use it. Having credible sources lends to a writer's own credibility.

Each source a writer uses must also be properly referenced with [citations](#). Anton's draft includes citations within the text, with parenthetical references next to the relevant information, as well as a properly formatted Works Cited section at the end. There are different methods for citation, so it's important to check with your Learning Coach about how they would like you to cite your work and then follow that method.

Updating the Outline

Another step in critiquing your research process is updating your outline based on what you learn as you research. This is something Anton had to do as part of his process.

Read the following section from Anton's outline.

Mystery Deepens

1. Examine later theories about who was involved in the robbery (“They Looked Like Cops”; Cascone)
2. Describe later efforts to recover the art by FBI and by the museum (Mahony “Gone but not forgotten”; Solly; Mahony “Convicted Gangster”)

The section “Mystery Deepens” was not part of Anton’s first outline. Anton had planned to discuss what happened to the missing paintings, however, since they have yet to be recovered, the research instead pointed Anton to a discussion of the individuals rumored to have obtained the paintings. Anton reworked his initial plan based on the actual information he could find and verify about his topic.

Question

Describe two steps writers should take to critique their research process.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: They should check that they have a variety of relevant and credible sources. They should make adjustments to their outline based on what they learn in their research.

Research Portfolio 2



Source: Dean Drobot. Shutterstock

Writing a Research Paper

Once your outline is complete, it is time to write your research paper using your outline as a guideline. It's always a good idea to review your prompt and consider your task, purpose, and audience before you begin to write.

Write a research paper about an event and the questions it provokes, and then use the information in the research paper to create a slideshow presentation.

Question 1

Remember, your paper should have three sections: the introduction, body, and conclusion. The introduction should contain your thesis statement and any necessary background information. The body of your paper should discuss each of your subtopics; your ideas should be supported by evidence. Your conclusion should restate your thesis and add any additional insights that bring the discussion to a close.

Integrating paraphrased, summarized, and quoted material into your writing can significantly enhance the quality and credibility of your work.

When you paraphrase, you restate someone else's ideas in your own words. This shows that you understand the material and can convey it in a new way. To paraphrase effectively, read the original text carefully, ensure you grasp its meaning, and then rewrite it using different words and sentence structures. Remember to cite the source to give proper credit.

Summarizing involves condensing the main ideas of a larger text into a brief overview. summarize when you need to provide background information or context without overwhelming your readers with too much detail. To summarize effectively, identify the key points of the original material and express them concisely in your own words. Like paraphrasing, summarizing requires proper citation to acknowledge the original source.

Quoting, on the other hand, involves using the exact words from a source, enclosed in quotation marks. quote text when the original wording is particularly powerful, precise, or authoritative. To integrate quotations smoothly into your writing, introduce them with a signal phrase that provides context, such as "According to," "As noted by," or "In the words of." Follow up with an explanation or analysis to show how the quotation supports your point. Proper citation is essential to avoid plagiarism and to give credit to the original author.

By skillfully combining paraphrased, summarized, and quoted material, you can create a well-rounded and compelling argument that demonstrates thorough research and a deep understanding of your topic.

Research Portfolio 2

Evaluating Your Drafts

After you write your first draft, read it through. Then check your work against your outline. Questions to consider include:

- Does my introduction hook the reader? Do I include enough background information? Is my thesis statement stated clearly?
- Does the text stray from my outline? If so, how come? Did I make an intentional decision to go in a different direction, or do I need to add some ideas from the outline into my text?
- In drafting my text, did I discover any gaps in my outline? Do I need to do any additional research to flesh out ideas?
- Do my ideas flow smoothly? Is the research integrated into the text and explained sufficiently? Do I need to add transitions to help the flow of ideas?
- Do I use paraphrases, quotes, and summaries to enhance the quality and credibility of my work?
- Does my conclusion tie up the main ideas in the text?
- Are my sources properly cited?

As you evaluate your draft, look for opportunities to make it stronger and more effective.

Examine an evaluation of an excerpt from Anton's introduction. Select the button. Then select each pin to learn more about evaluating your research text. There are four pins.

Research Portfolio 2 – Evaluating Your Draft Hot Spot

PlusColor ThemeDefault

✕

The night of March 18, 1990, was the end of St. Patrick's Day, a huge holiday in Boston and its largely Irish neighborhood, South Boston. Around the city, people were celebrating. However, two men sitting in a hatchback car outside of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum were quite serious. Although they were dressed as police, they were really art thieves. On that night, they pulled off the largest art theft in United States history (Halpern). The paintings they stole were worth \$200 million at the time but now would be valued at half a billion dollars (Mahony "Gone but not forgotten").

Question 2

As you near the end of your drafting, double check for spelling, grammar, and missing information such as incomplete or misplaced citations. This is an important step in polishing your draft. Grammar and spelling mistakes may seem minor, but they can distract readers from focusing on the ideas of the paper.

Check-In

Read a section from Anton’s outline and the first paragraph of that section from the text. Then complete the activity.

Outline Section: The Investigation

1. Explain crime investigation technology of the time (“They Looked Like Cops”)
2. Discuss what the investigation uncovered and what is still unknown (“They Looked Like Cops”; Boser; “New Development”)

Draft: The Investigation

At the time of the Gardner robbery, crime in the United States was at an all-time high. Violent crimes had risen to 5,802 per 100,000, up from 5,224 per 100,000 five years earlier (University at Albany). DNA analysis was not part of the law enforcement crime scene investigation at the time, so any forensic evidence could not have been analyzed. When the FBI arrived, the Boston police had disrupted the crime scene (“They Looked Like Cops”).

Activity

Anton evaluated his outline and made some changes, which are reflected in his draft. Describe a change he made and discuss why he may have made it.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Anton added a source to his draft that is not in his outline. The University at Albany source adds support to his claim that crime in the United States was at an all-time high in 1990. This addition may be in response to a gap

in the outline he noticed while writing. The information about crime in 1990 adds context and helps readers understand crime investigations of the era.

Need a little extra support?

[Get Help Here](#)

Practice

Activity

First, finalize your outline. Then, use your outline to write your research paper.

Remember to critique the research process as you go: consider opportunities to add or remove research and ensure that the sources you use are credible and properly cited.

Remember to ask your Learning Coach what citation method they prefer you use.

After you have written a first draft, take a break! Then, read through your draft carefully, resolving as needed any discrepancies between your outline and your text. As you revise your work, ask yourself:

- Are the main ideas and supporting details identified in my outline coming across clearly in the text?
- Do I need to do any targeted research to fill in gaps?
- Do the ideas flow smoothly? Should I add transitions?
- Does the text follow the structure I established in my outline?

Finally, check for spelling, punctuation, grammar, capitalization, and citation errors.

You don't want small mistakes to pull your reader's focus away from your ideas!

Pro Tip

If you are having trouble deciding if your ideas are supported with sufficient evidence, then try imagining what a skeptical reader might ask: How do you know that? Why do you think that? If those questions aren't answered in the text, you may need more targeted evidence.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I critiqued my research process by evaluating my sources.
 2. _____ I critiqued my research process by making necessary adjustments to my outline.
 3. _____ I wrote a research paper that has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.
 4. _____ I integrated information from research into the text selectively to create a flow of ideas.
 5. _____ I used proper grammar, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, and citations.
-

Now review the full Research Portfolio Rubric to prepare for what you will do next.

Research and Presentation Portfolio Rubric

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will develop a presentation of research findings.

Key Words

- **multimedia presentation** – a self-contained production using different forms of media to present information about a topic
 - **presentation type** – the form in which information is presented to the audience
 - **rhetorical device**- a type of language that is meant to have an effect on its audience
 - **style** – the way a writer tells a story or presents information; created through the use of word choice, syntax, descriptive techniques, and other devices
-

Research Portfolio 2



Source: 270058. Shutterstock

You've reached a major milestone. You wrote your research paper. Now it's time to think about the second part of your project: sharing your findings in a presentation. Presentations can take different forms, or [presentation types](#), such as an oral presentation, like a speech or podcast, or a [multimedia presentation](#) that combines audio and video.

For your project, you will create a slideshow presentation. You will develop a script, which you will present orally, and create slides, which will support and expand upon the information you deliver in your script. Your slides will provide your audience with accurate evidence and well-chosen details to help viewers learn more about your topic.

As with any presentation, you should consider your purpose and audience. Your purpose is to share your research findings, and your audience is your Learning Coach.

Based on what your Learning Coach requests, you may also share your presentation with others.

Watch the video and listen as Anton explains the steps he took to develop a multimedia presentation about his research on the Boston art heist. Look closely at how Anton included important details and how he made sure the information he presented was accurate. Think about his process and how it might help you develop your own presentation.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Question 1

What is a common way to structure a research presentation?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: A common way to structure a presentation is to follow the organizational structure of the research paper the presentation is based on, with an introduction, a body, and a conclusion.

Planning a Presentation

The first step in planning a presentation is to review your paper and make notes about how you might adapt your research into a slideshow format. Let’s say Anton wanted to adapt his paper into a slideshow presentation. Below is an example of annotations he might take to adapt his introduction. Notice that he includes notes on what to include in his script and what to include in his slides.

Composing Presentation Elements from Text

Text	Presentation

<p>The night of March 18, 1990, was the end of St. Patrick's Day, a huge holiday in Boston and its largely Irish neighborhood, South Boston. Around the city, people were celebrating. However, two men sitting in a hatchback car outside of the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum were quite serious. Although they were dressed as police, they were really art thieves. On that night, they pulled off the largest art theft in United States history (Halpern). The paintings they stole were worth \$200 million at the time but now would be valued at half a billion dollars (Mahony "Gone but not forgotten").</p>	<p>Script:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use similar narrative strategies to set the scene. • Deliver the thesis statement. • Describe the goals for the presentation. • Reference sources. <p>Slides:</p> <p>Slide 1: Images of St. Patrick's Day celebrations in Boston</p> <p>Slide 2: Image of exterior of Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum</p> <p>Slide 3: Display monetary values of stolen art. Use bullets.</p>
---	---

After you annotate your research paper with notes, you'll use those notes to compose a script and slides. Some writers choose to start with the script and then make the slides, while others choose to develop them simultaneously. You may need to experiment a bit to find which method works best for you.

Remember, like your research paper, presentations should be organized with an introduction, body, and conclusion. Key ideas should be presented logically. Each idea in a presentation should flow into the next one in a way that audience members can follow. Transition words and phrases such as *in contrast*, *in addition*, and *moreover* can help create this flow. Incorporate a variety of [rhetorical devices](#) in order to make an impact on your audience. For example, you may wish to incorporate a simile to highlight the similarities between two items using the words *like* or *as*. Or you may structure your presentation using parallelism, creating a pattern with sentences to make them more dramatic.

As you develop your presentation is style, or the way a writer or presenter tells a story or presents their information. Style is created through word choice, syntax, descriptive techniques, and other literary devices. Style can depend on the audience. Formal style with the use of academic language is best suited for classroom or workplace presentations while an informal style with the use of colloquial language is most appropriate for presentations to peers or younger audiences. Take notes about your audience and the tone you want to set as you develop your research paper into a presentation.

Question 2

What tips can you take from Anton's process and use for planning your slideshow presentation?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: One of the most important steps is to go through the research text and make notes that explain how you will adapt the research to create a slideshow presentation. After you have taken the notes, then you begin to draft the slideshow.

Check-In

Use what you learned about developing a presentation of research findings to complete the activity.

Activity

Reread your research text and make annotations about how to adapt your paper into a presentation. Take notes that will help you develop both the script and the slides. In addition to annotating your research paper, use the Presentation section of your research text planner to take notes.

- For your script, consider what main ideas, details, and evidence to include in your presentation. Remember to use formal language and academic vocabulary in your script. Think about the order in which you want to present your information. Consider how to create a compelling introduction and conclusion. Use rhetorical devices in your script to create an impact on your audience.
- For your slides, consider what digital media to include. Take notes about what headings, captions, images, graphs, audio, video, and text to include on your slides.

Need a little extra support?

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Practice

Activity

Use the annotations you made on your research paper to develop a script and a slideshow of your research findings. There are different methods for creating a presentation. Here is one option:

1. Review the task, purpose, and audience for your presentation.
2. Develop a script based on your annotations. In your script, include notes to remind you when to change slides.
3. Gather or collect the digital media you need for your slides.
4. Create your slides. Be sure the slides include accurate information and useful details.

In the next lesson, you will finish drafting your presentation, so don't worry if you don't have everything finalized yet.

Pro Tip

If you are having trouble deciding how to present your research findings, start with one section and summarize the key ideas in short phrases. You can use these as bullets on your slides. Look for concrete examples or details that can be represented visually. Think about what parts of your findings in that section will most intrigue your audience, and consider how to highlight that information in your presentation.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I started developing a script and slides based on my research text.
 2. _____ I presented my findings in a clear, concise, and logical manner: using formal language, academic vocabulary, and rhetorical devices.
 3. _____ I organized the presentation to fit the task, purpose, and audience.
 4. _____ I included accurate evidence as part of the presentation.
 5. _____ I included well-chosen details to strengthen the script.
-

Now, review the full Research Portfolio Rubric to prepare for what you will do next.

Research and Presentation Portfolio Rubric

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will make strategic use of digital media.

Key Words

- **digital media** – any form of communication that is made or viewed using technology—e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements
-

Research Portfolio 2

Create Media Products

Digital media is a tool that presenters can use to enhance their audience's understanding of their research findings, reasoning, and evidence and to add interest. It includes textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements.



Source: scyther5. Shutterstock

Making Digital Media Count

Effective presenters use digital media strategically. This means that the media you choose to include in your presentation should support your purpose: communicating your research findings to your audience. Take Anton’s multimedia presentation, for example. He included specific types of music to align with each section of his research. Anton did not choose random music just to have something in the background or music that he personally liked to listen to. The music he selected added an effect, or another layer, to the experience of watching the presentation; it had a clear connection to the content.

When you are adding media to your slideshow presentation, consider how the elements you choose can enhance your presentation and help you clearly communicate your points. Keep these tips in mind:

- Digital media should be decipherable, meaning that your audience should quickly be able to understand it. Use colors and fonts that are easy to read and understand.
- Don’t crowd the slides with too much media. Choose media selectively. A “busy” slide will distract the audience.
- If your media has an audio element, make sure it’s understandable and played at an appropriate level.
- The visual media should be easy to read or identify.
- Digital media should be appropriate, relevant, and specific. For example, if you are discussing the town of Taos, New Mexico, you may want to include a map of the state, highlighting the location of Taos. A detailed map of the entire southwest region would not be specific and relevant enough.

Gathering or Creating Digital Media

Writers can compile digital media during research or while they are developing their presentation. They can also create it themselves, drawing custom illustrations or creating charts using digital tools and software, taking photographs, or recording short

videos to dramatize or explain a topic. What you create yourself depends in part on what tools and software are available to you.

The following list includes just some ideas for digital media you could include in your slideshow:

- Pie charts
- Line graphs
- Maps
- Music
- Oral testimony
- Photographs
- Video
- Ambient sounds
- Animated illustrations
- Hand-drawn illustrations
- Captions
- Sidebars
- Symbols

Question

What digital media do you have in the draft of your presentation? What additional digital media would you like to include?

Check-In

Consider how Anton made strategic use of digital media in his presentation. Then, complete the activities.

Activity 1

Activity 2

Imagine a presenter is explaining a complex idea. Choose three types of digital media and explain how the media might be used to clarify the idea or make it more accessible to the audience.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Bullets are helpful in breaking down a complex idea into consumable “chunks.” If the concept involves data, a chart or graph can be used to communicate the information visually. A clear image or illustration can provide visual support to an idea the presenter is describing.

Need a little extra support?

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Practice

Activity

It's time to finish your presentation. Follow these steps.

1. Review the work you've done so far, taking note of the digital media. Evaluate the effectiveness of the media in your presentation. Should any media be replaced or improved upon?
2. Flag additional opportunities to enhance your presentation using digital media. Remember that the goal is to present your research findings clearly, concisely, and logically.
3. Finalize your slides and script. Remember to make sure that your script aligns with your slides.

In the next lesson you will practice delivering your presentation to your Learning Coach, and you will receive feedback, so make sure your slides and script are ready to go.

Pro Tip

If you are having trouble deciding on a strategic way to add digital media to your slideshow, then try viewing the slides all at once and notice if any seem weak, confusing, or distracting. Sometimes looking at the big picture of your presentation can help you identify elements to fix.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I used a variety of digital media in my slideshow presentation.
 2. _____ I made strategic decisions about what media to use and when to use it.
 3. _____ I found or created digital media to add interest, engage the audience, and support the overall purpose of my presentation.
-

Now, review the full Research Portfolio Rubric to prepare for what you will do next.

Research and Presentation Portfolio Rubric

Research Portfolio 3

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will use feedback to evaluate the presentation.

Key Words

- **feedback** – comments or reactions to an event or a person's performance with the intention of helping them make improvements
-

Research Portfolio 3

Work Creatively with Others

You've reached another significant milestone. Soon, you will practice delivering your presentation to your Learning Coach. A presentation that is clear, concise, and logical will help your audience follow along and understand the material being covered.

- A clear presentation ensures that the audience can understand the writer's main ideas and does not have confusion or doubt about the writer's meaning.
- A concise presentation means the writer has edited out unnecessary details that distract from the overall point being made.
- A logical presentation is one that leads the audience through the writer's reasoning, or thinking, behind how the writer reached their conclusions.



Source: kaboliczech. Shutterstock

A successful presenter keeps their demeanor and clarity of speech in mind as they present. They use declarative sentences and vary the tone of their voice.

- **Demeanor.** Presenters should present with confidence. A presenter's nervous or awkward behavior will distract from the content of their presentation. On the other hand, an audience will feel at ease with a confident presenter and be more inclined to focus on the content of the presentation. If presenting live, a presenter should strive for eye contact with the audience.
- **Clarity of speech.** It's important that presenters avoid mumbling and filling pauses with phrases such as *um*, *uh*, or *you know*. Also, they should not speak so quickly that they are difficult to understand. They should aim for an appropriate volume of voice, not too loud and not too quiet.
- **Declarative sentences.** We've all heard speakers who seem to end every sentence with a question mark. Their voices rise at the end of a sentence as if they are asking a question. Doing this can make a presenter sound tentative and unsure of themselves, which is not the image most presenters want to project.
- **Variation in tone of voice.** Variation can help keep an audience engaged. A presenter who speaks in a monotone, or one tone, throughout a presentation is likely to lose the interest of their audience.

Using Feedback to Evaluate a Presentation

All presentations have room for improvement. After you deliver your presentation, your Learning Coach will give you feedback. Their comments will help you evaluate what you need to do to revise and polish your presentation. Bringing in outside perspectives is an opportunity to work creatively with others to create a better presentation.

Based on the feedback you receive, you may find that certain parts of your presentation are not as clear as intended or that you need to clarify a particular idea or detail. You may learn that a section was not as concise as you intended or there is a leap or misstep in your logic that you can improve on. You may learn that you need to improve upon your delivery, such as making eye contact or adjusting the volume of your voice.

While feedback is important, it's not always easy to take it in. Consider these tips for making the most of the feedback you receive:

- Keep an open mind and be curious about any insight your audience shares with you. Think of it as data you can evaluate and implement to help you improve your presentation.
- If your audience gives you verbal feedback, listen carefully and take notes. To be sure you understand the feedback, ask your audience clarifying questions such as “Could you please explain what you meant by _____?” or “Could you give me a specific example about that issue?” Repeat back to them a summary of their feedback to confirm that you understood their ideas correctly.
- If your audience gives you written feedback, consider each item, one at a time, and note any follow-up questions you have.

Remember that the feedback you receive is about the presentation, not about you. After receiving comments, it can be helpful to pause and let yourself think through the feedback before responding.

Question 1

Describe an aspect of delivery a presenter should keep in mind.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: A presenter should focus on their clarity of speech. They want to avoid mumbling and speak in a strong, steady voice.

Question 2

Summarize the tips for responding to feedback.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Stay curious. Listen carefully and ask questions. Summarize the feedback. Take items one by one. Pause and reflect.

Check-In

Read some of the feedback Anton received on his multimedia presentation and then complete the activity.

- The music was enjoyable and helped set the scene. Unfortunately, it was a bit loud in parts, and I had a hard time hearing Anton.
- The images of the stolen art in the Heist section were small and difficult to see. I had a hard time focusing on Anton because I was trying to figure out what the pictures were.
- The conclusion was formal and summarized the thesis, but the delivery was a bit detached. Anton sounded like he was rushing to finish.

Question

Based on the feedback, how might Anton improve his presentation?

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Anton should adjust the volume of the music so that it doesn't compete with his voice as he's presenting. He should increase the size of the images. During the conclusion, Anton should try to slow down, focusing on tying up his presentation in a powerful way. He should make eye contact with the audience.

Need a little extra support?

[Get Help Here](#)

Practice

Activity

It is time to present your presentation to your Learning Coach and to receive their feedback. Remember, this process is about helping you improve your work.

After you’ve presented your slideshow, check in with your Learning Coach and receive your feedback. Remember to ask follow-up questions if you need any of their points clarified.

Once you have their feedback, use it to evaluate your presentation. Consider using the following table as a guide:

Using Feedback to Evaluate Presentation	
What elements were effective?	
What elements need improvement?	
What specific actions can I take to enhance my presentation?	

Finally, use the feedback to improve your presentation.

In the next lesson, you will have one last opportunity to make revisions and edits before you deliver your finalized presentation to your Learning Coach.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I presented my presentation to my Learning Coach.
 2. _____ I received feedback and sought clarification as needed.
 3. _____ I used the feedback to evaluate and strengthen my project.
-

Now, review the full Research Portfolio Rubric to prepare for what you will do next.

Objective and Key Words

Objective

In this section, you will strengthen your presentation by revising and editing.

Key Words

- **edit** – to correct written, visual, audible, or cinematic material
 - **revise** – to modify and improve a version of a presentation
-

Research Portfolio 3

Congratulations! Soon you will complete the final steps of your project. Revising and editing are important steps in strengthening and improving your project, and these steps will lead to a more polished presentation.

First, you will continue to revise your presentation based on the feedback you received from your Learning Coach. You will make any changes that will improve the content, structure, and style of your presentation. Then, you will edit your work to fine-tune grammar, punctuation, and spelling, as well as correct any technical glitches or issues with your digital media.



Source: hvostik. Shutterstock

Revising Your Presentation

When you revise a presentation, you review your content and organization for final improvements. Below is a list of some possible revision tasks:

- Add missing details or remove unnecessary ones.
- Rearrange the order of slides to help with flow.
- Replace or add digital media.
- Align your script and slides more closely.
- Refine word choices to be more engaging.

Watch the video and listen as Anton explains the steps he took to revise and edit his presentation. Think about how these steps improved his presentation.

Video cannot be displayed on Print Preview

Question 1

Describe a revision Anton made.

Reveal Answer

Sample answer: Anton removed extraneous historical content, streamlining his presentation.

Writers often use a revising checklist to help them with the process. Read the checklist Anton used to revise his final presentation for “Unsolved: Mrs. Gardner’s Missing Masterpieces.”

Revising Checklist: Presentation

- Does the introduction of my presentation include my thesis statement?
Does it draw the audience into the presentation in an engaging way?
- Does my word choice demonstrate my knowledge of the topic and help the audience understand the topic better?
- Do the main sections of my presentation flow and connect in a logical sequence? Are transitions needed to smooth the connections between and among ideas?
- Is the topic developed with well-chosen, relevant, and sufficient facts, details, quotations, and other information and examples? Is this

information or evidence presented clearly and concisely?

- Has information from my sources been integrated effectively into the presentation to maintain a flow of ideas?
- Is the presentation missing details or clarifications important to understanding the topic? Conversely, are there unnecessary details or ideas that should be deleted?
- Does the presentation have opportunities for appropriate engagement with the audience?
- Does the digital media serve the purpose of the presentation?
- Does the conclusion follow from and support information in the research presentation?

Question 2

What did you find most helpful about Anton's checklist? How might it help you revise your presentation?

Research Portfolio 3

Editing Your Presentation

It's important to edit so that your audience can focus on your ideas and not unintentional mistakes in the slides. When editing a presentation, focus on the particulars of word use, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and capitalization to ensure that your project is error-free. You should also deal with any technical issues, such as animated graphics that aren't working properly, blurry images, or sound effects that cut out too soon.

It helps to focus on editing in a separate review of your presentation. As you review, look for the following:

- misspelled words
- overused or repeated words in the same sentence or slide
- incorrect capitalization of proper nouns, such as names of people, places, and companies
- grammatical mistakes
- errors in punctuation
- technical problems with your digital media

Anton created another checklist to help with editing his presentation. A checklist of common mistakes is an objective way for a writer like Anton to focus on and then fix mistakes during the editing phase. Read Anton's checklist.

Editing Checklist: Presentation

Language

- Are certain words used repeatedly? Can they be replaced with a more precise word or phrase?
- Are sources cited correctly?

Grammar

- Does the writing use correct verb tenses and verb forms?
- Do subjects and verbs agree in number and form?

Punctuation and Capitalization

- Are the names of people and places capitalized correctly?
- Are headings and titles capitalized correctly?

Spelling

- Are the names of people and places capitalized correctly?
- Are homophones (words that sound like other words, but have different meanings and spellings) used and spelled correctly?
- Have you given your text a final read-through in addition to using a spell check?

Technical Issues

- Are visual elements clear and easy to understand?
- Are auditory elements working properly?

Check-In

Review your presentation and make notes about any revisions or edits you wish to make as you finalize your project.

Use Anton's checklists to help you identify problem areas. You can personalize the checklists by adding errors you commonly make or problems you are noticing for the first time.

Revising Checklist: Presentation

[Editing Checklist: Presentation](#)

Need a little extra support?

[Get Help Here](#)

Practice

Activity

Use your notes to revise and edit your presentation. Review the feedback you received from your Learning Coach and make sure that you have addressed all the issues they raised. Refer to the checklists again as needed.

Revising Checklist: Presentation

Editing Checklist: Presentation

After you have revised and edited your presentation, read it through carefully one more time to make certain that you did not introduce any new errors while making your edits, such as mistakenly cutting an important word or sentence.

Finally, make sure that you have used proper formatting for your presentation. Check that information is not cut off on any of the slides, and that the font is legible. Make sure that you have a title slide with the title of your presentation and your name.

Pro Tip

Consider saving different versions of your presentation as you go through the revision and editing process. Another option is to turn on the track changes function. The track changes function will allow you to undo a revision or edit later if you change your mind.

How Did I Do?

Assess your response to the Practice activity by completing this checklist. If necessary, go back and revise your work.

1. _____ I revised my presentation to improve the structure, flow, and clarity of content.
2. _____ I ensured that I used proper source citations.

3. _____ I edited my presentation to correct errors in language, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.
4. _____ I strengthened my presentation by fixing any technical errors.
5. _____ I formatted my presentation correctly.

Then, review the full Research Portfolio Rubric to prepare for what you will do next.

Research Portfolio 3

Reflect

Read over your finished portfolio with the rubric in hand. Think not only about how well your materials reflect the criteria on the rubric, but also on the process you undertook to complete the project.

Research and Presentation Portfolio Rubric

Then, choose three of the questions below and use them to reflect on the experience of completing a research project. Write your answers in your notebook.

1. How did forming a research plan and evaluating the project at each stage help you?
2. What was a hurdle you had to overcome as you wrote your text and created your presentation? What did you do to get past this challenge?

3. Which part of the project did you enjoy most: researching, writing your text, creating your presentation, or delivering your presentation? Why?
4. What did you learn about yourself as a writer and presenter while working on this project?

Now, consider the self-selected text you have been reading over the course of this unit. Suppose you had the opportunity to have a discussion with the author of this text—writer to writer. List three questions you would ask the writer about their process. How might their observations strengthen your own writing abilities?

