

SREB Readiness Courses  
*Transitioning to college and careers*

# Literacy Ready

English Unit 1

The Academic Notebook



Name



## Unit 1

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## Course Overview

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Welcome to the first English literacy unit of the SREB Readiness Course- Literacy Ready. What does English literacy mean? English literacy is based on an understanding that texts—both literary and informational—provide a terrain for interrogating the meanings of human experiences and that literary texts are open to dialogue between and among readers and texts. When reading texts in English classes, both in high school and in college, students should be able to:

- read for and recognize the development of argument/claim/evidence structure and point of view over the course of a text,
- decipher rhetorical strategies and patterns,
- make inferences from details,
- analyze how the author’s choices contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text,
- draw on prior knowledge to construct interpretations, and
- use the text to reflect on the human condition or the reader’s life.

In this course, you will take part in several activities aimed at improving your literacy, specifically as literacy is used in English. While certainly the content covered in this course is important, a principal purpose of this course is to equip you with the tools necessary to be more successful in your college coursework. To that end, the creators of the course have developed this academic notebook.

## Purposes of the Academic Notebook

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The academic notebook has several roles in this course. First, you will keep a record of your reading of the central text, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, by making reading log entries for assigned readings. The idea behind the reading logs is to provide you with both direction and structure for collecting the ideas, for noticing the structure of the argument, and for evaluating the claims and the evidence in this central text. The notes that you take in the reading log will be used at the end of the unit as preparation for a synthesis essay, in which you will take a position on one of the arguments made in the central text and synthesize information supporting your position.

A second role of the notebook is to provide you with a space in which you can make note of new vocabulary that you encounter in the text and collect information about the meanings of those words. To carry out this role, you will use vocabulary charts to make note of words that are new to you, write the context in which you find the word, rate your understanding of the word, and write a dictionary definition for the word as well as your own understanding of that definition.

The final role of the notebook is that of an assessment tool. Your instructor may periodically take up the notebooks and review your work to insure that you are remaining on task and to assist you with any material that is causing you difficulty. At the end of this six-week module, your instructor will review the contents of this notebook as part of your overall grade. Thus, it is important that you take this work seriously as this notebook becomes the record of your activity in this course.

You will notice that a good deal of the work involved in this course will need to be done as homework. For some of you, this increased amount and difficulty of homework may be a challenge. As the purpose of this course is to prepare you for the types of reading and writing you will do in college, and as college courses typically require significant amounts of homework, it is important that you commit yourself to maintaining consistency in your homework.

The academic notebook is organized by lesson, and your teacher will give you instructions on which pages you should attend to during class and for homework.

# Lesson 1

## The Impact of Noise

### In this lesson, you will . . .

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- Explore the nature of disciplinary literacy in English/language arts classes, as well as the goals and purposes of the course.
- Read informational text so as to recognize argument, claim, and evidence structure and point of view in relation to the central claim of *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*.
- Participate in a data collection and analysis experiment designed to engage you with the content of the unit, to assist you in understanding how evidence can be used to substantiate claims and to develop a definition for *multitasking*.
- Apply strategies for locating words in an informational text that are unfamiliar to you and determining the meaning of those words, using both context clues and definitions.

Activity

# 1 Student Survey

## Directions:

Take a few minutes to think about the questions below; write a brief response to each question. You will be asked to share your responses with the whole group.

1. What kinds of reading and writing have you typically done in an English class?

2. How do you use the Internet?

3. In general, on a daily basis, how much time do you spend on the Internet?

4. Do you multitask? If so, how?



Activity

## 2 Net Enthusiasts / Net Skeptics

Your teacher will read for you the first three paragraphs of *The Shallows*, Prologue: The Watchdog and the Thief, pages one and two, helping you to understand and analyze this section.

As you read the remainder of the Prologue, look for words and phrases that will help you understand what Carr means by the terms “net enthusiast” and “net skeptic” and write those words and phrases, as well as your own definition for these terms, in the graphic organizer below. Your teacher will provide you with the dictionary definition of an “enthusiast” and a “skeptic.” What additional information does the definition provide for you?

<b>net enthusiast</b>	<b>net skeptic</b>
Textual clues	Textual clues
My definition based on those clues	My definition based on those clues
Added information from the dictionary definition	Added information from the dictionary definition
Revised definition	Revised definition

Activity

## 2 Reading Log

**Reading Log:** Read *The Shallows*, Prologue: The Watchdog and the Thief, pages one through four.

As you read, take notes using the chart below. Be sure to include page numbers and cite the text.

In the Prologue, Carr argues that we have been so dazzled by new communication technologies and the access they provide that we have neglected to see some potential negative effects they may have on us. In the space below, write down the possible negative effects that Carr mentions, including page numbers.

Activity

**3** Gateway Activity

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**“A Necessary Tranquilizer” by Arthur C. Clarke**

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**Directions:** Read the following passage. Answer the questions that follow the passage by circling the letter of the correct answer. This is a timed reading assignment and you will have 10 minutes to read and answer the questions.

(1) We have all seen unbuttoned beer-bellies slumped in front of the TV set, and transistORIZED morons twitching down the street, puppets controlled by invisible disc jockeys.

(2) These are not the highest representatives of our culture; but, tragically, they may be typical of the near future. (3) As we evolve a society oriented toward information, and move away from one based primarily on manufacture and transportation, there will be millions who cannot adapt to the change. (4) We may have no alternative but to use the lower electronic arts to keep them in a state of drugged placidity.

(5) For in the world of the future, the sort of mindless labor that has occupied 99 percent of mankind, for much more than 99 percent of its existence, will of course be—even work that they don't like. (7) In a workless world, therefore, only the highly educated will be able to flourish, or perhaps even to survive. (8) The rest are likely to destroy themselves and their environment out of sheer frustration. (9) This is no vision of the distant future; it is already happening, most of all in the decaying cities.

(10) So perhaps we should not despise TV soap operas if, during the turbulent transition period between our culture and real civilization, they serve as yet another opium for the masses. (11) This drug, at any rate, is cheap and harmless, serving to kill Time—for those many people who like it better dead.

1. According to Clarke, why will we need the TV set in the information age?
  - a. To numb the masses of people who cannot adapt to change.
  - b. To relieve the boredom people experience from working.
  - c. To assist with the transition to the information age.
  - d. To educate the masses who are workless.
2. Clarke suggests that the main purpose of work is
  - a. To allow the educated to flourish.
  - b. To produce competent citizenry.
  - c. To rebuild the decaying cities.
  - d. To alleviate boredom.
3. Which of the following best describes the tone of this passage?
  - a. Outraged
  - b. Sarcastic
  - c. Amused
  - d. Optimistic
4. In sentence 11, “This drug” is referring to:
  - a. Opium
  - b. Soap operas
  - c. TV
  - d. Education
5. Clarke makes all of the following predictions about man’s ability to adapt to the change from a manufacturing based society to an information based society EXCEPT...
  - a. They will destroy the environment.
  - b. They will destroy themselves.
  - c. They will need opium to suppress frustration.
  - d. They will need to kill time with TV.

Number of your correct answers:

Average scores for the multitasking group:

Average scores for the non-multitasking group:

What is the class's definition of multitasking?

What connections can you make between this multitasking experiment and Carr's argument?

Activity

## 4 Consulting an Expert

### Interview with Clifford Nass

**Directions:** Work either individually or with a partner to read and annotate the interview with Clifford Nass, a professor at Stanford University and the founder and director of the Communication between Humans and Interactive Media (CHIME) Lab, below. Annotation involves making notes in the margin, based on your reading of the text. Annotation is another of several strategies for note-taking that you will be using throughout this unit; eventually, you will select and use the best strategies for your own style of note-taking. For this annotation exercise, use the following symbols for your annotations:

**M** = anything that adds to or changes our understanding of the definition of “multitasking.”

**B** = big ideas that are important for our understanding of the experiment that Nass and his colleagues are doing.

In addition, underline or highlight the specific text that you are targeting with your annotation.

**Interviewer: What is multitasking?**

Nass: *Multitasking as we’re studying it here involves looking at multiple media at the same time. So we’re not talking about people watching the kids and cooking and stuff like that. We’re talking about using information, multiple sources. And that is the part of everyone’s life that’s growing so rapidly.*

**Interviewer: So what’s the big point here [behind your research]? ...**

Nass: *The big point here is, you walk around the world, and you see people multitasking, working on tasks while watching TV, while talking with people. If they’re at the computer, they’re playing games and they’re reading e-mail and they’re on Facebook, etc. Yet classic psychology says that’s impossible; no one can do that. So we’re confronted with a mystery. Here are all these people doing things that psychology says is impossible. And we want to ask the question, how do they do it? Do they have some secret ingredient, some special ability that psychologists had no idea about, or what’s going on?*

**Interviewer: What are you putting them through here [in your lab]?**

Nass: *What we’re doing here is, we’re giving them different tasks that ask about the most basic ways the brain works. We’re not literally throwing them in with 10 different things at once, but to ask the question, do their brains work differently? Do high multitaskers think about information differently than low multitaskers?*

**Interviewer: Explain to me what a high multitasker and a low multitasker is.**

Nass: *We call those high multitaskers ... who are constantly using many things at one time when it comes to media. So let’s say they’re doing e-mail while they’re chatting, while they’re on Facebook, while they’re reading websites, while they’re doing all these other things. And low multitaskers are people who really are more one-at-a-time people. When they’re texting, they’re texting. When they’re reading a website, they’re reading a website. So those are the low multitaskers.*

*Psychologists say all of us should be low multitaskers. But obviously the world's changing, and more and more people, especially young people, but even older people, are becoming multitaskers.*

**Interviewer: What are the experiments that you're doing today?**

*Nass: Today we have people doing two experiments. The first one asks the question, can high and low multitaskers focus on something and not be distracted? Because one would think to multitask, you'd have to be good at ignoring distractions and going, "Oh, that's important; that's unimportant."*

*The idea we're looking at today is can high multitaskers ignore irrelevancy, which would seem to be very important. So what we do is we're going to show them red rectangles and blue rectangles, tell them all we want to know is did the red rectangles move. Ignore the blue. They're totally irrelevant. And what we want to see is if the high multitaskers can ignore them, the blue, very well, or are they suckers for looking at the blue rectangles.*

**Interviewer: What about the other experiment?**

*Nass: The other experiment has to do with the idea of shifting from one task to another. In fact, that's where the term "multitasking" comes from. So what we're doing here is we're telling people, we're going to either show you the word "letter" or "number" and then show you a letter and number. And if you see the word "letter," press this letter if it's a vowel and this one if it's a consonant. If you see the word "number," press this one if it's even and this one if it's odd. And the idea is to see when people have to switch from looking at the number to looking at the letter, how fast are they? Are high multitaskers fast multitaskers? Or are they in some sense slower, crippled by having to switch from task to task?*

**Interviewer: What did you expect when you started these experiments?**

*Nass: Each of the three researchers on this project thought that ... high multitaskers [would be] great at something, although each of us bet on a different thing.*

*I bet on filtering. I thought, those guys are going to be experts at getting rid of irrelevancy. My second colleague, Eyal Ophir, thought it was going to be the ability to switch from one task to another. And the third of us looked at a third task that we're not running today, which has to do with keeping memory neatly organized. So we each had our own bets, but we all bet high multitaskers were going to be stars at something.*

**Interviewer: And what did you find out?**

*Nass: We were absolutely shocked. We all lost our bets. It turns out multitaskers are terrible at every aspect of multitasking. They're terrible at ignoring irrelevant information; they're terrible at keeping information in their head nicely and neatly organized; and they're terrible at switching from one task to another.*

**Interviewer: So what do you make of that?**

*Nass: We're troubled, because if you think about it, if on the one hand multitasking is growing not only across time, but in younger and younger kids we're observing high levels of multitasking, if that is causing them to be worse at these fundamental abilities —I mean, think about it: Ignoring irrelevancy—that seems pretty darn important. Keeping*

*your memory in your head nicely and neatly organized—that’s got to be good. And being able to go from one thing to another? Boy, if you’re bad at all of those, life looks pretty difficult.*

*And in fact, we’re starting to see some higher-level effects [of multitasking]. For example, recent work we’ve done suggests we’re worse at analytic reasoning, which of course is extremely valuable for school, for life, etc. So we’re very troubled about, on the one hand, the growth, and on the other hand, the essential incompetence or failure.*

*One would think that if people were bad at multitasking, they would stop. However, when we talk with the multitaskers, they seem to think they’re great at it and seem totally unfazed and totally able to do more and more and more. We worry about it, because as people become more and more multitaskers, as more and more people—not just young kids, which we’re seeing a great deal of, but even in the workplace, people being forced to multitask, we worry that it may be creating people who are unable to think well and clearly.*

**Interviewer: Are there certain kinds of thought that suffer more than others?**

*Nass: It’s a great question. The answer is yes. So we know, for example, that people’s ability to ignore irrelevancy—multitaskers love irrelevancy. They get distracted constantly. Multitaskers are very disorganized in keeping their memory going so that we think of them as filing cabinets in the brain where papers are flying everywhere and disorganized, much like my office.*

*And then we have them being worse at switching from one task to another. It’s very troubling. And we have not yet found something that they’re definitely better at than people who don’t multitask.*

**Interviewer: We were at MIT, and we were interviewing students and professors. And the professors, by and large, were complaining that their students were losing focus because they were on their laptops during class, and the kids just all insisted that they were really able to manage all that media and still pay attention to what was important in class—pick and choose, as they put it. Does that sound familiar to you?**

*Nass: It’s extremely familiar. And the truth is, virtually all multitaskers think they are brilliant at multitasking. And one of the big new items here, and one of the big discoveries is, you know what? You’re really lousy at it. And even though I’m at the university and tell my students this, they say: “Oh, yeah, yeah. But not me! I can handle it. I can manage all these,” which is, of course, a normal human impulse. So it’s actually very scary.*

**Interviewer: So who are these kids that you picked [for your study] to come in here today?**

*Nass: We picked the kids at Stanford who are multitasking a whole lot. So on a college campus, most kids are doing two things at once, maybe three things at once. These are kids who are doing five, six or more things at once, all the time.*

*So they’re the kids who are texting while talking with people, while working on their papers, while chatting on multiple sessions. They’re the kids who are playing multiple games on their screen while they’re doing Facebook, while they’re talking, while they’re doing all these other things. So these are the extreme kids, the kids who are at the very, very high end of that.*

**Interviewer: And do these kids think they're pretty good at it?**

Nass: *Yeah. They all seem to think they're really good at it. In fact, what's ironic is when we talk with people who multitask all the time, those who don't—even though our research suggests the ones who don't would actually be better at it—they're the ones who are sure they're really bad at it. And the ones who do it all the time and are sure they are great at it are really bad at it. So it's a real question: What's going on?*

*Some things that we know get lost are, first of all, anytime you switch from one task to another, there's something called the "task switch cost," which basically, imagine, is I've got to turn off this part of the brain and turn on this part of the brain. And it's not free; it takes time. So one thing that you lose is time.*

*A second thing you lose is when you're looking at unrelated things, our brains are built to relate things, so we have to work very, very hard when we go from one thing to another, going: "No, not the same! Not the same! Stop it! Stop it!" It's why people who aren't multitaskers, like me, often experience when we're typing and someone walks up and starts talking with you—you've probably had this—you start typing their words and go, "Ah, what happened?" And that's because your brain loves to mix. So we're spending a lot of time trying to beat down this combining brain we have.*

*At the end of the day, it seems like it's affecting things like ability to remember long term, ability to handle analytic reasoning, ability to switch properly, etc., if this stuff is, again, ... trained rather than inborn. If it's inborn, what we're losing is the ability to do a lot of things that we're doing. We're doing things much, much poorer and less efficiently in time. So it's actually costing us time.*

*One of the biggest delusions we hear from students is, "I do five things at once because I don't have time to do them one at a time." And that turns out to be false. That is to say, they would actually be quicker if they did one thing, then the next thing, then the next. It may not be as fun, but they'd be more efficient.*

**Interviewer: You're confident of that?**

Nass: *Yes. There's lots and lots of evidence. And that's just not our work. The demonstration that when you ask people to do two things at once they're less efficient has been demonstrated over and over and over. No one talks about it—I don't know why—but in fact there's no contradictory evidence to this for about the last 15, 20 years. Everything [as] simple as the little feed at the bottom of a news show, the little text, studies have shown that distracts people. They remember both less. Studies on asking people to read something and at the same time listen to something show those effects. So there's really, in some sense, no surprise there. There's denial, but there's no surprise.*

*The surprise here is that what happens when you chronically multitask, you're multitasking all the time, and then you don't multitask, what we're finding is people are not turning off the multitasking switch in their [brain]—we think there's a switch in the brain; we don't know for sure—that says: "Stop using the things I do with multitasking. Focus. Be organized. Don't switch. Don't waste energy switching." And that doesn't seem to be turned off in people who multitask all the time.*

**Interviewer: So are you suggesting that by multitasking all the time, we are actually changing our brains and making our brains worse at focusing on one thing?**

Nass: *There's a good chance. We don't know for sure, because it also could be that people are born to multitask. That is, they're born with the desire to do all these things, and that's making them worse. But there is reason to worry at least, and believe that.*

*One of the other worries is, we're seeing multitasking younger and younger and younger. So in a lovely study, someone showed that when infants were breastfeeding and the television was on, infants were doing a lot of television watching. Now, if we think about it, the way that we think that breastfeeding evolved the way it did is the distance from the mother's face to the infant is the perfect focal distance. The voice is one that's very attractive.*

*Well, if you think about it, what is television filled with? Faces and voices. What do babies love? Faces and voices. So now, at a time when we believe that children learn intense concentration, they're being drawn away. Then as they get older, as they get to 3 or 4, we started feeling guilty that we put kids in front of the TV as a baby-sitter. So what did we do? We didn't turn off the TV. We started giving them toys, books, etc., while they're watching TV. So what are we telling them? We're telling them, "Don't pay attention; do many things at once." Well, it may not then be surprising that years later, that's how they view the media world.*

**Interviewer: So is there any movement to stop all this multitasking?**

Nass: *Oddly enough, we see the opposite. We see a number of societal forces encouraging multitasking. So in a lot of workplaces we see people being told, "You must answer e-mail within 15 minutes." Well, that means you're stopping what you're doing. Or, "You must keep your chat windows open."*

*Among software, how many new apps are there every single day on the iPhone, on the Android? How many new YouTube videos are there? How often does Facebook change? So, if anything, cultural forces and the expectation that people will respond instantly and chat and talk and do all these things all at once means, frankly, all the pressure is going that way.*

*We are seeing some rebellion. So, for example, [there are] companies, you know, calling me and saying, "How can we stop this? Our workforce is being driven crazy," or teachers trying desperately—mostly failing—to control the level of multitasking in the classroom. But it seems like mostly a losing battle.*

**Interviewer: It's disturbing.**

Nass: *It is scary. And it changes. We don't know how to teach to multitaskers. We don't know how to design software for multitaskers. We don't know how to have conversations effectively with multitaskers. So we're utterly unprepared for a world we're being thrust into.*

**Interviewer: What about the notion that kids, because they've learned how to multitask for longer, are better at it than people like you and I?**

Nass: *We expected that, and we hope that. There are some colleagues who are looking at kids and children and development. One of the things we're seeing important for kids is—already mentioned it—very young age groups, infants watching TV ... and doing a bunch of other tasks.*

*But what we're also seeing is, in younger and younger ages, social relationships occurring online rather than face to face, and all the classical theories of developmental psychology worked on the assumption that kids would interact with other kids, and you learned everything from that—everything from moral development to your identity to whatever. We're seeing incredible growth in social multitasking among younger and younger kids. We're talking third grade, fourth grade. As soon as they can write, one of the first things they're writing is social communication, not reading books. So now all of a sudden, we're changing that, too.*

*Of course the advantage is, it's hard for me to navigate talking with two people at once. But on the Web, I can easily talk with—well, not easily [for me]—I can talk with four people at once. I can have four different conversations at the same time. So we don't know at all—and again, it's scary just because we don't know—how are their brains changing. How is the whole nature of social life [changing] because of multitasking?*

*One of the biggest points here I think is, when I grew up, the greatest gift you could give someone was attention, and the best way to insult someone was to ignore them. ... The greatest gift was attention. Well, if we're in a society where the notion of attention as important is breaking apart, what now is the relationship glue between us? Because it's always been attention.*

**Interviewer: What is it [now]? Do you have any theories?**

*Nass: No. None at all, and it's scary, because this seems to be an inexorable trend.*

Text of website:

([www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation/interviews/nass.html#1](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/digitalnation/interviews/nass.html#1)).

## Nass's Experiment and the Definition of Multitasking

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**Directions:** Now that you have read the interview with Clifford Nass, you will be divided into two groups. Using your annotations (M), one group will flesh out the class's definition of multitasking. The other group will use its annotations (B) to develop a summary of Nass's research. Each group will report out. Use the space below to complete these tasks.

<b>Multitasking</b>	<b>Summary of Nass's Research</b>

Activity

## 6 Homework Preparation

**Reading Log:** Read *The Shallows*, Chapter One: Hal and Me, pages five through 16.

As you read, take notes using the T-chart below. Be sure to include page numbers and cite the text.

Write **at least five statements** from the reading, including quotes with page numbers, that contain the evidence that Carr is using to make his argument.

Write **one sentence** capturing the “big idea” or the argument that Carr is making in this chapter.



Using your notes from the reading, what types of evidence does Carr provide (i.e., personal narrative, blog posts, etc.)?

## Lesson 2

# The Rhetorical Précis

### In this lesson, you will . . .

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- Read informational text so as to recognize argument, claim, and evidence structure and point of view in relation to the central claim of *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*.
- Demonstrate your ability to summarize and understand the rhetorical situation of a text by creating a rhetorical précis of an informational text.

Activity

# 1 Reading for Claim and Evidence

## Developing a Claim and Evidence

**Directions:** Work with a small group or partner to develop a central claim statement and a list of evidence for chapter one of *The Shallows*. Use your reading log for chapter one (see page 17) and write your group's claim statement and evidence in the space below.

Activity

## 2 Writing the Rhetorical Précis

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### Deep Reading for Learning

#### Patrick Sullivan:

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**Directions:** Read the letter below. You can underline, highlight, take notes, annotate in the margins, look up words in the dictionary, or use other tools that work for you while you read.

An Open Letter to High School Students about Reading

The value of reading as preparation for college should never be underestimated, not even as the focus of higher education turns to STEM majors and career preparation.

By Patrick Sullivan

Dear High School Students,

Greetings!

A few years ago I wrote an open letter to ninth graders about college readiness, trying to provide beginning high school students with a college professor’s perspective on what being ready for college really means (see “[An Open Letter to Ninth Graders](#)” in the January–February 2009 issue of *Academe*). As it turns out, “being ready” involves a lot more than taking a particular sequence of courses or achieving a certain GPA. My original letter received a very enthusiastic response from high school teachers and students. Some teachers even had their students write their own letters back to me in response to what I said. It was great getting feedback directly from high school students.

There were many areas of agreement expressed in the letters I have received from students over the years, but one rather consistent area of resistance was about reading. In my letter, I told students that if they wanted to be ready for college they needed to love reading, they needed to read for pleasure, and they needed to do a lot of reading overall. A number of the students I heard from did not like this advice one bit.

I have a few more things I’d now like to share with you about getting ready for college—and, believe it or not, they all involve reading.

My research has confirmed that “deep” reading and reading for pleasure may be the most important things you can do to prepare for college.

One study that has shaped my thinking on this subject was conducted by Alice Sullivan and Matt Brown. Their research showed that reading for pleasure produces important benefits across a variety of academic disciplines (including math) and that “reading is actually linked to increased cognitive progress over time.” Obviously, these cognitive gains will help you regardless of your major or career aspirations. This study was based on data gathered from six thousand students in the United Kingdom. It may seem counterintuitive that reading can help you with math, but if we think of reading as an activity that by its very nature—regardless of what you are reading—helps us develop more sophisticated ways of understanding the world, then it makes good sense.

As the French novelist Marcel Proust noted, “It is through the contact with other minds

which constitutes reading that our minds are fashioned.” Exposure to new vocabulary, new ideas and conceptual understandings, new ways of forging relationships between ourselves and others and ourselves and the world, and new forms of reasoning help us do this.

Another important study that has helped shape my understanding of the importance of reading to college readiness was conducted by French sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron. These researchers found that the influence of language skills developed through reading, conversation, and family life “never ceases to be felt” across an individual’s life span. And the benefits go much deeper than vocabulary: “Language is not simply an instrument of communication: it also provides, together with a richer or poorer vocabulary, a more or less complex system of categories, so that the capacity to decipher and manipulate complex structures, whether logical or aesthetic,” depends partly on the complexity of the language a student possesses. Some of this is passed down like an inheritance by one’s family, and some is gained through effort, application, and focused attention to reading. Reading, then, can literally help determine the way we are able to think.

As I mentioned in my first letter, science has begun to play an important role in our understanding of learning, and some fascinating discoveries have been made in this regard related to reading. We now know that the brain actually changes as a result of engaged, effortful learning and that when we challenge ourselves to learn something new, the brain forms new neural pathways. These new pathways make us smarter. As psychologist Carol Dweck has noted, “More and more research is showing that our brains change constantly with learning and experience and that this takes place throughout our lives.”

The discovery of the brain’s “neuroplasticity” has important implications for you as students. New evidence suggests that intelligence and IQ are not fixed but rather can be strengthened through effort and activity. In fact, researcher Maryanne Wolf has shown that reading itself has had a profound impact in shaping human history and the development of the human brain: “Reading is one of the single most remarkable inventions in history; the ability to record history is one of its consequences. Our ancestors’ invention could come about only because of the human brain’s extraordinary ability to make new connections among its existing structures, a process made possible by the brain’s ability to be shaped by experience. This plasticity at the heart of the brain’s design forms the basis for much of who we are, and who we might become.” Wolf suggests there is great value in students engaging in challenging reading activities—reading that is “time-demanding, probative, analytical, and creative.” This is important research for you to know about as you think about getting ready for college and establishing the kind of approach to your work that you will choose to take in high school.

There has also been a great deal of research recently on the difference between “deep learning” and “surface learning.” Much of this research focuses on how students engage with the texts they read for school. A key variable in this research is how students position themselves as readers in classrooms. Some ways of engaging with texts provide very powerful opportunities for growth, while others provide very limited opportunities. In one study, sociologists Judith C. Roberts and Keith A. Roberts found that many students see “reading” as simply forcing one’s eyes to “touch” each word on the assigned pages, and many students candidly admit that they do not even

read assigned materials at all. Many students often read only to finish rather than to understand what they have read. Students may favor this kind of approach to learning because it requires minimal effort. Obviously, however, with minimal effort comes minimal rewards.

“Deep learning” and “deep reading” require a very different kind of engagement and investment from you, but they produce significant gains that can help develop college-level skills and dispositions. Instead of memorization, recall, and shallow engagement, “deep reading” requires reflection, curiosity, humility, sustained attention, a commitment to rereading, consideration of multiple possibilities, and what the education scholar Sheridan Blau has called “intellectual generosity.” These are characteristics highly valued in the workplace, and they can be of great service to you in all areas of your life. Why not start developing them now?

Reading researchers have also found that we read for all kinds of different reasons, and readers often have to adjust their reading strategies for different purposes and contexts. When we read for pleasure, we often read a text just once, and rather quickly, focusing on the enjoyment and the pleasure. When we read a complex text or sophisticated research, we may still focus on the enjoyment of encountering new ideas and challenging content, but we often have to change our approach and read more carefully, more slowly, and more deliberately. We also have to assume that we will likely need to reread key passages in order to understand them fully. I do this myself almost every day in my professional life as a scholar and teacher, even though I am a fairly skilled reader.

Strong readers expect to make situational adjustments in how they read, depending on context and purpose—and on what they are reading and why they are reading it. This understanding can be a very useful component of your repertoire of college-level reading skills and strategies.

So what am I recommending? I recommend that you start to find a way right now to enjoy reading and to make it an important part of your life. A great deal of research has been done on the importance of free choice in building engagement with reading, so choosing what you are interested in is a great way to start. You can read whatever books or articles you want. Of course, we all enjoy reading social media, but we’re not going to count that. Let’s focus, instead, on books and articles. This kind of reading requires sustained concentration that will help you develop a number of important cognitive skills, including the capacity to focus your attention for longer periods of time and the ability to monitor and direct your reading processes (metacognition). These skills will be vitally important to you in college and beyond.

I wish you the very best in your high school years and great success as you transfer to college and put these essential reading and thinking skills to work. If you’d like to discuss anything that I’ve said here, please feel free to write me a letter or send me an e-mail. I would enjoy hearing from you.

*Patrick Sullivan is an English professor at Manchester Community College in Manchester, Connecticut. His most recent book is A New Writing Classroom: Listening, Motivation, and Habits of Mind. He can be reached at [psullivan@mcc.commnet.edu](mailto:psullivan@mcc.commnet.edu) or through the mail at the English Department, Manchester Community College, Manchester, CT 06045-1046.*

<https://www.aaup.org/article/open-letter-high-school-students-about-reading#.WgSEcmhSziU>

In the section below, write a bulleted list of the essential ideas of “An Open Letter,” using your own words.

Compare your bulleted list with one written by a partner. What ideas did you both select as being essential to the summary?

## Rhetorical Précis Guidelines and Sample

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First, provide the MLA citation for the text on which you are creating a rhetorical précis. (See MLA citation guide on pages 24 – 25 for more help with citations.)

**If it is an **electronic** journal, the MLA citation will look like this:**

Sullivan, Patrick. "An Open Letter to High School Students about Reading."  
*Academe*, vol. 102, no. 3, May-June 2016, [www.aaup.org/article/open-letter-high-school-students-about-reading#.WgSEcmhSzlU](http://www.aaup.org/article/open-letter-high-school-students-about-reading#.WgSEcmhSzlU). Accessed 29 Nov. 2017.

**If it is a **print** journal, the MLA citation will look like this:**

Sullivan, Patrick. "An Open Letter to High School Students about Reading."  
*Academe*, vol. 102, no. 3, May-June 2016, pp.

NOTE: This article is not available in print; but if it were, add the page numbers.

**Sentence 1:** The first sentence should include the author's name, the title of the work, the date of publication in parentheses, a rhetorically accurate verb (such as asserts, argues, suggests, implies, claims), and a that-clause containing the major assertion (thesis statement) of the work.

**EXAMPLE:** Patrick Sullivan in "An Open Letter to High School Students about Reading" (2016) asserts that one of the most important things students can do to prepare for college is to read deeply and for pleasure.

**Sentence 2:** The second sentence should: (a) explain how the author develops and/or supports the thesis; (b) discuss how the author accomplishes his/her task; and (c) support the strong verb used in sentence one; and cite where to locate the specific points addressed.

**EXAMPLE:** Sullivan supports this assertion by citing academic studies, scientific research, and expert testimony while exploring what it means to read and to learn "deeply."

**Sentence 3:** The third sentence should state the author's apparent purpose, followed by an "in order to" phrase.

**EXAMPLE:** The writer concludes that students must read frequently and with engagement in order to be prepared for college and beyond.

**Sentence 4:** The fourth sentence should describe the intended audience and/or the relationship the author establishes with the audience.

**EXAMPLE:** The writer establishes a conversational tone to convince his audience of high school students that they must find a way to enjoy reading and to make it a part of their everyday lives.

## MLA Citation Guide

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### A Book (Print version):

Carr, Nicholas G. *The Big Switch: Rewiring the World, from Edison to Google*. W.W. Norton, 2008.

Carr, Nicholas G. *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*. W.W. Norton, 2010.

### A Book (Electronic version):

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Essays*, edited by Edna H. L. Turpin, 2005.  
Project Gutenberg, [www.gutenberg.org/files/16643/16643-h/16643-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/16643/16643-h/16643-h.htm).

Freud, Sigmund. *Dream Psychology: Psychoanalysis for Beginners*. 2005.  
Project Gutenberg, [www.gutenberg.org/files/15489/15489-h/15489-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15489/15489-h/15489-h.htm).

### A Scholarly Journal (Electronic):

McCullough, Heather. "The Fate of Reading, Thinking, and Learning in an Electronic Age." *International Journal of the Book* vol. 7, no. 2, 2010, [doi.org/10.18848/1447-9516/CGP/v07i04/36819](https://doi.org/10.18848/1447-9516/CGP/v07i04/36819). Accessed 21 Dec. 2016.

Stephenson, Wen. "The Message Is The Medium: A Reply To Sven Birkerts and The Gutenberg Elegies." *Chicago Review* vol. 41, no. 4, 1995, p. 116. EBSCOhost, [connection.ebscohost.com/c/essays/9512296368/message-medium-reply-sven-birkerts-gutenberg-elegies](http://connection.ebscohost.com/c/essays/9512296368/message-medium-reply-sven-birkerts-gutenberg-elegies). Accessed 21 Dec. 2016.

### A Scholarly Journal (Print):

Nystrand, Martin. "Research on the Role of Classroom Discourse As It Affects Reading Comprehension." *Research in the Teaching of English* vol. 40, no. 4, 2006, pp. 392-412.

### A Magazine Article (Electronic version):

Birkerts, Sven. "Resisting the Kindle." *The Atlantic*. March 2009, [www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/03/resisting-the-kindle/307345/](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2009/03/resisting-the-kindle/307345/). Accessed 21 Dec. 2016.

Khater, Rami. "Social Media Evolution, Not Revolution." *The Huffington Post*. 20 Dec. 2012, [www.huffingtonpost.com/rami-khater/social-media-evolution-no\\_b\\_2338465.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rami-khater/social-media-evolution-no_b_2338465.html). Accessed 21 Dec. 2016.

### A Blog (Electronic version):

Karp, Scott. "The Evolution from Linear Thought to Networked Thought." *Publishing 2.0*, 9 Feb. 2008, [publishing2.com/2008/02/09/the-evolution-from-linear-thought-to-networked-thought/](http://publishing2.com/2008/02/09/the-evolution-from-linear-thought-to-networked-thought/). Accessed 21 Dec. 2016.

### Practicing the Rhetorical Précis

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**Directions:** Write a rhetorical précis of pages 5-10 from Chapter One of *The Shallows* in the space below, following the pattern for a rhetorical précis.

In the space below, write an MLA citation for *The Shallows*, paying attention to the sample MLA book citation.

**Sample MLA book citation (print):**

Carr, Nicholas G. *The Big Switch: Rewiring the World, from Edison to Google*. W.W. Norton, 2008.

Activity

### 3 Note Taking on Carr's Chapter 2

**Reading Log:** Read *The Shallows* Chapter Two, “The Vital Paths” and “a digression: what the brain thinks about when it thinks about itself” (pages 17-38).

As you read, take notes using the T-chart below. Be sure to include page numbers and cite the text.

Write **at least five statements** from the reading, including quotes with page numbers, that contain the evidence that Carr is using to make his argument.

Write **one sentence** capturing the “big idea” or the argument that Carr is making in this chapter.



Notes

Write **at least five statements** from the reading, including quotes with page numbers, that contain the evidence that Carr is using to make his argument.

Write **one sentence** capturing the “big idea” or the argument that Carr is making in this chapter.



Notes

What are the “Vital Paths” that are referenced in the title of this chapter?

What connection to his main argument does Carr make in “a digression”?

## Lesson 3

# Vital Paths

### In this lesson, you will . . .

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- Debrief your experience writing the rhetorical précis, examine the skills developed in the writing practice, and revise your précis.
- Apply strategies for locating words in an informational text that are unfamiliar to you and determining the meaning of those words, using both context clues and definitions.
- Read informational text so as to recognize argument, claim, and evidence structure and point of view in relation to the central claim of *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*.
- Demonstrate your ability to evaluate evidence and recognize the types of evidence that can be used to support a claim in argument writing.
- Demonstrate your understanding of the writing task and expectations for success.

Activity

## 2 Examining the Prompts for the Synthesis Essay

### Synthesis Essay Assignment

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**Read the assignment description for the culminating project of this unit. Then respond to the prompt below.**

How is the exponential increase of information that we process in all forms of media affecting the way we live? After reading Nicholas Carr's *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* and other informational texts on the impact of information technology, write a synthesis essay in which you support a thesis based on one of the following quotes from Carr's text. Support your position with evidence from the texts.

*"With the exception of alphabets and number systems, the Net may well be the single most powerful mind-altering technology that has ever come into general use. At the very least, it's the most powerful that has come along since the book" (Carr 118).*

*"Karp, Friedman, and Davis—all well-educated men with a keenness for writing—seem fairly sanguine about the decay of their faculties for reading and concentrating. All things considered, they say, the benefits they get from using the Net—quick access to loads of information, potent searching and filtering tools, an easy way to share their opinions with a small but interested audience—make up for the loss of their ability to sit still and turn the pages of a book or magazine" (Carr 8).*

*"The price we pay to assume technology's power is alienation. The toll can be particularly high with our intellectual technologies. The tools of the mind amplify and in turn numb the most intimate, the most human, of our natural capacities—those for reason, perception, memory, emotion" (Carr 211).*

Use your best voice, academic language, and third person point of view. Incorporate at least three sources (at least one from our class discussions) to support your ideas. Include at least three direct quotes; all quotes and paraphrased information must include a parenthetical citation. The last page of your paper should be your Works Cited page. Follow all MLA guidelines for formatting and documentation.

You will also give a three-minute presentation highlighting the main ideas presented in your essay. Your presentation should:

- include your thesis statement,
- include at least three main points that support your thesis,
- include at least three pictures/charts/graphs (some visual representation) of the three main points, and
- follow all MLA guidelines for formatting and documentation.

Select one of the three quotes from Carr that interests you the most.

What kind of ideas and thoughts do you have in response to this prompt? What have you seen so far in Carr's text or in the other texts you have read that seems to connect to this quote?

Select one of the three quotes from Carr that interests you the most.

What kind of ideas and thoughts do you have in response to this prompt?

What have you seen so far in Carr's text or in the other texts you have read that seems to connect to this quote?

## Rubric for Synthesis Essay

Scoring Elements	1 Not Yet	1.5	2 Approaches Expectations	2.5	3 Meets Expectations	3.5	4 Advanced
Focus	Attempts to address prompt, but lacks focus or is off-task.		Addresses prompt appropriately and establishes a position, but focus is uneven.		Addresses prompt appropriately and maintains a clear, steady focus. Provides a generally convincing position.		Addresses all aspects of prompt appropriately with a consistently strong focus and convincing position.
Controlling Idea	Attempts to establish a claim, but lacks a clear purpose.  Makes no mention of counter claims.		Establishes a claim  Makes note of counter claims.		Establishes a credible claim.  Develops claim and counter claims fairly.		Establishes and maintains a substantive and credible claim or proposal.  Develops claims and counter claims fairly and thoroughly.
Reading/ Research	Attempts to reference reading materials to develop response, but lacks connections or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.		Presents information from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt with minor lapses in accuracy or completeness.		Accurately presents details from reading materials relevant to the purpose of the prompt to develop argument or claim.		Accurately and effectively presents important details from reading materials to develop argument or claim.
Development	Attempts to provide details in response to the prompt, but lacks sufficient development or relevance to the purpose of the prompt.  Makes no connections or a connection that is irrelevant to argument or claim.		Presents appropriate details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim, with minor lapses in the reasoning, examples, or explanations.  Makes a connection with a weak or unclear relationship to argument or claim.		Presents appropriate and sufficient details to support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim.  Makes a relevant connection to clarify argument or claim.		Presents thorough and detailed information to effectively support and develop the focus, controlling idea, or claim.  Makes a clarifying connection(s) that illuminates argument and adds depth to reasoning.
Organization	Attempts to organize ideas, but lacks control of structure.		Uses an appropriate organizational structure for development of reasoning and logic, with minor lapses in structure and/or coherence.		Maintains an appropriate organizational structure to address specific requirements of the prompt. Structure reveals the reasoning and logic of the argument.		Maintains an organizational structure that intentionally and effectively enhances the presentation of information as required by the specific prompt. Structure enhances development of the reasoning and logic of the argument.
Conventions	Attempts to demonstrate standard English conventions, but lacks cohesion and control of grammar, usage and mechanics. Sources are used without citation.		Demonstrates an uneven command of standard English conventions and cohesion.  Uses language and tone with some inaccurate, inappropriate, or uneven features. Inconsistently cites sources.		Demonstrates a command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone appropriate to the audience, purpose and specific requirements of the prompt. Cites sources using appropriate format with only minor errors.		Demonstrates and maintains a well-developed command of standard English conventions and cohesion, with few errors. Response includes language and tone consistently appropriate to the audience, purpose and specific requirements of the prompt. Consistently cites sources using appropriate format.
Content Understanding	Attempts to include disciplinary content in argument, but understanding of content is weak; content is irrelevant, inappropriate, or inaccurate.		Briefly notes disciplinary content relevant to the prompt; shows basic or uneven understanding of content; minor errors in explanation.		Accurately presents disciplinary content relevant to the prompt with sufficient explanations that demonstrate understanding.		Integrates relevant and accurate disciplinary content with thorough explanations that demonstrate in-depth understanding.

## Evaluating Source Materials

**Directions:** In the spaces below, create a timeline for completion of this project.

	How and when will I do this?	What resources do I need?
Review Assignment		
Collect notes and look for holes		
Collect additional research		
Write a summary paragraph		
Create an outline		
Write a rough draft		
Create and give a presentation		
Revise and edit		
Submit final draft		

Activity

**3** Vocabulary

**Vocabulary from Carr’s Chapter Two, “Vital Paths”**

**Directions:**

Choose ONE of the words from the list in the box below and ONE unfamiliar word from Chapter Two. For each of your words, complete the chart below. Remember to use the context of the word (the sentence in which it is found) to help you understand the dictionary definition.

Choice words and the page numbers on which they can be found:

- |                  |                   |                      |                  |
|------------------|-------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| philology (17)   | immutability (21) | nihilism (23)        | habituated (28)  |
| concentric (18)  | malleable (21)    | peripheral (25)      | empiricism (28)  |
| ingenious (18)   | plasticity (21)   | neuroplasticity (25) | rationalism (28) |
| telegraphic (18) | tenuous (23)      | meticulous (26)      | determinism (34) |
| appendages (19)  |                   |                      |                  |

Word from the list:	My understanding of this word is (check one):
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:	
What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Word I have chosen from Chapter Two:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  Excellent          Fair          Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:  What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Activity

**4** Homework

Using your reading log, work with a partner to make a list of the types of evidence that Carr provides (i.e., historical events, quotes from experts, personal anecdotes, and other types).

**Reading Log:** Read *The Shallows*, Chapter Three: “Tools of the Mind” (pages 17-38).

As you read, take notes using the T-chart below. Be sure to include page numbers and cite the text.

<p>According to Carr, how can our intellectual maturation be traced through mapmaking?</p>	<p>What was the historical progression of the mechanical clock? What influenced the advances of the mechanical clock?</p>
<p>What is Carr’s purpose in presenting this information about mapmaking and time keeping? In other words, what is the claim he is making in this chapter, using information about mapmaking and timekeeping?</p>	

**Vocabulary from Carr’s Chapter Three, “Tools of the Mind”**

**Directions:**

Choose ONE of the words from the list in the box below and ONE unfamiliar word from Chapter Three. For each of your words, complete the chart below. Remember to use the context of the word (the sentence in which it is found) to help you understand the dictionary definition.

Choice words and the page numbers on which they can be found:

- |                  |                      |                       |                   |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| maturation (39)  | theodolite (40)      | proliferation (43)    | conundrum (49)    |
| topographic (40) | cyclical (41)        | instrumentalists (46) | proxies (49)      |
| cartography (40) | agrarian (41)        | determinists (46)     | logographic (51)  |
| egocentric (40)  | synchronization (42) | metallurgy (48)       | logosyllabic (53) |

Word from the list:	My understanding of this word is (check one):
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> Fair <input type="checkbox"/> Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:	
What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Word I have chosen from Chapter Three:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  Excellent          Fair          Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:  What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

## Lesson 4

# The Mind, the Page and a Synthesis

### In this lesson, you will . . .

---

- Read informational text so as to recognize argument, claim, and evidence structure and point of view in relation to the central claim of *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*.
- Demonstrate the ability to understand and analyze Carr's content, specifically the history of early technologies and how those technologies impact humanity.
- Apply strategies for locating words in an informational text that are unfamiliar to you and determining the meaning of those words, using both context clues and dictionaries.
- Read several documents, collecting information on how those documents connect or disconnect with the ideas in the central text, and they will watch a model synthesis in preparation for writing the synthesis essay.

Activity

**2** Chapter 3

### Developing a Claim

Directions: In the space below, follow the directions for your group's assignment related to Carr's Chapter Three. Remember that a claim statement should fit the following criteria:

- A claim is typically a statement of the point that the author is trying to make.
- A good claim should be one that is debatable, one that reasonable people can hold different ideas on.
- It should take a strong stand, and it should have a quality antithesis, or counterargument.

**Group 1:** Examine the section of Chapter Three that begins on page 44 and ends on page 50. In this section, Carr categorizes technological tools and defines determinists and instrumentalists. With your group members, write a one-sentence claim that Carr is making in this section.

**Group 2:** Examine the section of Chapter Three that begins on page 50 and ends on page 57. In this section, Carr describes how intellectual technologies of reading and writing shape our brains. With your group members, write a one-sentence claim that Carr is making in this section.

Activity

**3** Homework

**Reading Log 6**

**Directions:** Read *The Shallows*, Chapter Four: The Deepening Page. Answer the following questions, being sure to use page numbers and cite the text as you answer.

In the space below, trace the history of the book (pages 58-67).

In the space below, trace the history of the printing press (pages 68-76).

In the space below, write a one-sentence summary of Carr's two paragraphs on page 77.

**“a digression: on lee de forest and his amazing audion”**

What connections do you find between Carr's description of the development of the Audion and his emerging argument?

### Vocabulary from Carr's Chapter Four, "The Deepening Page"

#### Directions:

Choose ONE of the words from the list in the box below and ONE unfamiliar word from Chapter Four. For each of your words, complete the chart below. Remember to use the context of the word (the sentence in which it is found) to help you understand the dictionary definition.

Choice words and the page numbers on which they can be found:

ephemera (58)	codex (60)	anomaly (64)	gendarmes (70)
scribes (59)	cognitive (61)	seeditious (65)	tawdry (71)
parchment (59)	mellifluous (62)	propagation (67)	symbiotic (74)
stylus (59)	obsolete (62)	adept (69)	idiosyncratic (75)
artisan (60)	antithetical (63)		nonlinear (76)

Word from the list:	My understanding of this word is (check one):		
	Excellent	Fair	Poor
Context (including page number):			
Dictionary definition:			
What in the world does that mean?			
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:			

Word I have chosen from Chapter Four:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  Excellent      Fair      Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:  What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Activity

## 5 The Power of Literacy

### The Power of Literacy

**Directions:** Your teacher will place you into a group that will read one of the three excerpts that follow. For your excerpt, you should:

1. Respond to this question: Do you think that the writer of the excerpt you are reading would agree or disagree with Carr? How so?

2. Collectively write a rhetorical précis on the excerpt your group is reading. Be sure to provide an MLA citation for the excerpt.

### Excerpt from Benjamin Franklin's *Autobiography* taken from *Gutenberg Online Library*:

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Not having any copy here of what is already written, I know not whether an account is given of the means I used to establish the Philadelphia public library, which, from a small beginning, is now become so considerable, though I remember to have come down to near the time of that transaction (1730). I will therefore begin here with an account of it, which may be struck out if found to have been already given.

At the time I establish'd myself in Pennsylvania, there was not a good bookseller's shop in any of the colonies to the southward of Boston. In New York and Philad'a the printers were indeed stationers; they sold only paper, etc., almanacs, ballads, and a few common school-books. Those who lov'd reading were oblig'd to send for their books from England; the members of the Junto had each a few. We had left the alehouse, where we first met, and hired a room to hold our club in. I propos'd that we should all of us bring our books to that room, where they would not only be ready to consult in our conferences, but become a common benefit, each of us being at liberty to borrow such as he wish'd to read at home. This was accordingly done, and for some time contented us.

Finding the advantage of this little collection, I propos'd to render the benefit from books more common, by commencing a public subscription library. I drew a sketch of the plan and rules that would be necessary, and got a skilful conveyancer, Mr. Charles Brockden, to put the whole in form of articles of agreement to be subscribed, by which each subscriber engag'd to pay a certain sum down for the first purchase of books, and an annual contribution for increasing them. So few were the readers at that time in Philadelphia, and the majority of us so poor, that I was not able, with great industry, to find more than fifty persons, mostly young tradesmen, willing to pay down for this purpose forty shillings each, and ten shillings per annum. On this little fund we began. The books were imported; the library was opened one day in the week for lending to the subscribers, on their promissory notes to pay double the value if not duly returned. The institution soon manifested its utility, was imitated by other towns, and in other provinces. The libraries were augmented by donations; reading became fashionable; and our people, having no publick amusements to divert their attention from study, became better acquainted with books, and in a few years were observ'd by strangers to be better instructed and more intelligent than people of the same rank generally are in other countries.

When we were about to sign the above-mentioned articles, which were to be binding upon us, our heirs, etc., for fifty years, Mr. Brockden, the scrivener, said to us, "You are young men, but it is scarcely probable that any of you will live to see the expiration of the term fix'd in the instrument." A number of us, however, are yet living; but the instrument was after a few years rendered null by a charter that incorporated and gave perpetuity to the company.

The objections and reluctances I met with in soliciting the subscriptions, made me soon feel the impropriety of presenting one's self as the proposer of any useful project, that might be suppos'd to raise one's reputation in the smallest degree above that of one's neighbors, when one has need of their assistance to accomplish that project. I therefore put myself as much as I could out of sight, and stated it as a scheme of a number of friends, who had requested me to go about and propose it to such as they thought

lovers of reading. In this way my affair went on more smoothly, and I ever after practis'd it on such occasions; and, from my frequent successes, can heartily recommend it. The present little sacrifice of your vanity will afterwards be amply repaid. If it remains a while uncertain to whom the merit belongs, some one more vain than yourself will be encouraged to claim it, and then even envy will be disposed to do you justice by plucking those assumed feathers, and restoring them to their right owner.

This library afforded me the means of improvement by constant study, for which I set apart an hour or two each day, and thus repair'd in some degree the loss of the learned education my father once intended for me. Reading was the only amusement I allow'd myself. I spent no time in taverns, games, or frolicks of any kind; and my industry in my business continu'd as indefatigable as it was necessary. I was indebted for my printing-house; I had a young family coming on to be educated, and I had to contend with for business two printers, who were established in the place before me. My circumstances, however, grew daily easier. My original habits of frugality continuing, and my father having, among his instructions to me when a boy, frequently repeated a proverb of Solomon, "Seest thou a man diligent in his calling, he shall stand before kings, he shall not stand before mean men," I from thence considered industry as a means of obtaining wealth and distinction, which encourag'd me, tho' I did not think that I should ever literally stand before kings, which, however, has since happened; for I have stood before five, and even had the honor of sitting down with one, the King of Denmark, to dinner.

**Excerpt from Emerson's *The American Scholar* essay taken from Gutenberg Online Library:**

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II. The next great influence into the spirit of the scholar is the mind of the Past,—in whatever form, whether of literature, of art, of institutions, that mind is inscribed. Books are the best type of the influence of the past, and perhaps we shall get at the truth,—learn the amount of this influence more conveniently,—by considering their value alone.

The theory of books is noble. The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him life; [25] it went out from him truth. It came to him short-lived actions; it went out from him immortal thoughts. It came to him business; it went from him poetry. It was dead fact; now, it is quick thought. It can stand, and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires.[15] Precisely in proportion to the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing.

Or, I might say, it depends on how far the process had gone, of transmuting life into truth. In proportion to the completeness of the distillation, so will the purity and imperishableness of the product be. But none is quite perfect. As no air-pump can by any means make a perfect vacuum,[16] so neither can any artist entirely exclude the conventional, the local, the perishable from his book, or write a book of pure thought, that shall be as efficient, in all respects, to a remote posterity, as to contemporaries, or rather to the second age. Each age, it is found, must write its own books; or rather, each generation for the next succeeding. The books of an older period will not fit this.

Yet hence arises a grave mischief. The sacredness which attaches to the act of creation, the act of thought, is instantly transferred to the record. The poet chanting was felt to be a divine man. Henceforth the chant is divine also. The writer was a just and wise spirit. Henceforward it is settled the book is perfect; as love of the hero corrupts into worship of his statue. Instantly the book becomes noxious.[17] [26] The guide is a tyrant. We sought a brother, and lo, a governor. The sluggish and perverted mind of the multitude, always slow to open to the incursions of Reason, having once so opened, having once received this book, stands upon it, and makes an outcry if it is disparaged. Colleges are built on it. Books are written on it by thinkers, not by Man Thinking, by men of talent, that is, who start wrong, who set out from accepted dogmas, not from their own sight of principles. Meek young men grow up in libraries, believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke,[18] which Bacon,[19] have given; forgetful that Cicero, Locke and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books.

Hence, instead of Man Thinking, we have the bookworm. Hence the book-learned class, who value books, as such; not as related to nature and the human constitution, but as making a sort of Third Estate[20] with the world and soul. Hence the restorers of readings,[21] the emendators,[22] the bibliomaniacs[23] of all degrees. This is bad; this is worse than it seems.

Books are the best of things, well used; abused, among the worst. What is the right use? What is the one end which all means go to effect? They are for nothing but to inspire.[24] I had better never see a book than to be warped by its attraction clean out of my own orbit, and made a satellite instead of a system. The one thing in the world of value is the [27] active soul,—the soul, free, sovereign, active. This every man is entitled to; this every man contains within him, although in almost all men obstructed, and

as yet unborn. The soul active sees absolute truth and utters truth, or creates. In this action it is genius; not the privilege of here and there a favorite, but the sound estate of every man.[25] In its essence it is progressive. The book, the college, the school of art, the institution of any kind, stop with some past utterance of genius. This is good, say they,—let us hold by this. They pin me down.[26] They look backward and not forward. But genius always looks forward. The eyes of man are set in his forehead, not in his hindhead. Man hopes. Genius creates. To create,—to create,—is the proof of a divine presence. Whatever talents may be, if the man create not, the pure efflux of the Deity is not his;[27]—cinders and smoke there may be, but not yet flame. There are creative manners, there are creative actions, and creative words; manners, actions, words, that is, indicative of no custom or authority, but springing spontaneous from the mind's own sense of good and fair.

On the other part, instead of being its own seer, let it receive always from another mind its truth, though it were in torrents of light, without periods of solitude, inquest, and self-recovery; and a fatal disservice[28] is done. Genius is always sufficiently the enemy of genius by over-influence.[29] The literature of [28] every nation bear me witness. The English dramatic poets have Shakespearized now for two hundred years.[30]

Undoubtedly there is a right way of reading, so it be sternly subordinated. Man Thinking must not be subdued by his instruments. Books are for the scholar's idle times. When he can read God directly, the hour is too precious to be wasted in other men's transcripts of their readings.[31] But when the intervals of darkness come, as come they must,—when the soul seeth not, when the sun is hid and the stars withdraw their shining,—we repair to the lamps which were kindled by their ray, to guide our steps to the East again, where the dawn is.[32] We hear, that we may speak. The Arabian proverb says, "A fig-tree, looking on a fig-tree, becometh fruitful."

It is remarkable, the character of the pleasure we derive from the best books. They impress us ever with the conviction that one nature wrote and the same reads. We read the verses of one of the great English poets, of Chaucer,[33] of Marvell,[34] of Dryden,[35] with the most modern joy,—with a pleasure, I mean, which is in great part caused by the abstraction of all time from their verses. There is some awe mixed with the joy of our surprise, when this poet, who lived in some past world, two or three hundred years ago, says that which lies close to my own soul, that which I also had well-nigh thought and said. But for the evidence thence afforded to the philosophical doctrine of the identity of all minds, we should [29] suppose some pre-established harmony, some foresight of souls that were to be, and some preparation of stores for their future wants, like the fact observed in insects, who lay up food before death for the young grub they shall never see.

I would not be hurried by any love of system, by any exaggeration of instincts, to underrate the Book. We all know that as the human body can be nourished on any food, though it were boiled grass and the broth of shoes, so the human mind can be fed by any knowledge. And great and heroic men have existed who had almost no other information than by the printed page. I only would say that it needs a strong head to bear that diet. One must be an inventor to read well. As the proverb says, "He that would bring home the wealth of the Indies must carry out the wealth of the Indies." There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. When the mind is braced by labor and invention, the page of whatever book we read becomes luminous with

manifold allusion. Every sentence is doubly significant, and the sense of our author is as broad as the world. We then see, what is always true, that as the seer's hour of vision is short and rare among heavy days and months, so is its record, perchance, the least part of his volume. The discerning will read, in his Plato<sup>[36]</sup> or Shakespeare, only that least part,—only the authentic utterances of the oracle;—all the rest he rejects, were it never so many times Plato's and Shakespeare's.

[30]

Of course there is a portion of reading quite indispensable to a wise man. History and exact science he must learn by laborious reading. Colleges, in like manner, have their indispensable office,—to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us when they aim not to drill, but to create; when they gather from far every ray of various genius to their hospitable halls, and by the concentrated fires set the hearts of their youth on flame. Thought and knowledge are natures in which apparatus and pretension avail nothing. Gowns<sup>[37]</sup> and pecuniary foundations,<sup>[38]</sup> though of towns of gold, can never countervail the least sentence or syllable of wit.<sup>[39]</sup> Forget this, and our American colleges will recede in their public importance, whilst they grow richer every year.

### Excerpt from Frederick Douglass' Narrative taken from Gutenberg Online Library:

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I lived in Master Hugh's family about seven years. During this time, I succeeded in learning to read and write. In accomplishing this, I was compelled to resort to various stratagems. I had no regular teacher. My mistress, who had kindly commenced to instruct me, had, in compliance with the advice and direction of her husband, not only ceased to instruct, but had set her face against my being instructed by any one else. It is due, however, to my mistress to say of her, that she did not adopt this course of treatment immediately. She at first lacked the depravity indispensable to shutting me up in mental darkness. It was at least necessary for her to have some training in the exercise of irresponsible power, to make her equal to the task of treating me as though I were a brute.

My mistress was, as I have said, a kind and tender-hearted woman; and in the simplicity of her soul she commenced, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed one human being ought to treat another. In entering upon the duties of a slaveholder, she did not seem to perceive that I sustained to her the relation of a mere chattel, and that for her to treat me as a human being was not only wrong, but dangerously so. Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me. When I went there, she was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman. There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear. She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner that came within her reach. Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness. The first step in her downward course was in her ceasing to instruct me. She now commenced to practise her husband's precepts. She finally became even more violent in her opposition than her husband himself. She was not satisfied with simply doing as well as he had commanded; she seemed anxious to do better. Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper. She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper, in a manner that fully revealed her apprehension. She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other.

From this time I was most narrowly watched. If I was in a separate room any considerable length of time, I was sure to be suspected of having a book, and was at once called to give an account of myself. All this, however, was too late. The first step had been taken. Mistress, in teaching me the alphabet, had given me the *inch*, and no precaution could prevent me from taking the *ell*.

The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read. When I was sent of errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge. I am strongly tempted to give the names of

two or three of those little boys, as a testimonial of the gratitude and affection I bear them; but prudence forbids;—not that it would injure me, but it might embarrass them; for it is almost an unpardonable offence to teach slaves to read in this Christian country. It is enough to say of the dear little fellows, that they lived on Philpot Street, very near Durgin and Bailey’s ship-yard. I used to talk this matter of slavery over with them. I would sometimes say to them, I wished I could be as free as they would be when they got to be men. “You will be free as soon as you are twenty-one, *but I am a slave for life!* Have not I as good a right to be free as you have?” These words used to trouble them; they would express for me the liveliest sympathy, and console me with the hope that something would occur by which I might be free.

I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being a *slave for life* began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled “The Columbian Orator.” Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. The slave was represented as having run away from his master three times. The dialogue represented the conversation which took place between them, when the slave was retaken the third time. In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of by the slave. The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master—things which had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master.

In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan’s mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation. These were choice documents to me. I read them over and over again with unabated interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance. The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder. What I got from Sheridan was a bold denunciation of slavery, and a powerful vindication of human rights. The reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Any thing, no matter what, to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in every thing. It was ever present to torment me with

a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm.

I often found myself regretting my own existence, and wishing myself dead; and but for the hope of being free, I have no doubt but that I should have killed myself, or done something for which I should have been killed. While in this state of mind, I was eager to hear any one speak of slavery. I was a ready listener. Every little while, I could hear something about the abolitionists. It was some time before I found what the word meant. It was always used in such connections as to make it an interesting word to me. If a slave ran away and succeeded in getting clear, or if a slave killed his master, set fire to a barn, or did any thing very wrong in the mind of a slaveholder, it was spoken of as the fruit of *abolition*. Hearing the word in this connection very often, I set about learning what it meant. The dictionary afforded me little or no help. I found it was “the act of abolishing;” but then I did not know what was to be abolished. Here I was perplexed. I did not dare to ask any one about its meaning, for I was satisfied that it was something they wanted me to know very little about. After a patient waiting, I got one of our city papers, containing an account of the number of petitions from the north, praying for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and of the slave trade between the States. From this time I understood the words *abolition* and *abolitionist*, and always drew near when that word was spoken, expecting to hear something of importance to myself and fellow-slaves. The light broke in upon me by degrees. I went one day down on the wharf of Mr. Waters; and seeing two Irishmen unloading a scow of stone, I went, unasked, and helped them. When we had finished, one of them came to me and asked me if I were a slave. I told him I was. He asked, “Are ye a slave for life?” I told him that I was. The good Irishman seemed to be deeply affected by the statement. He said to the other that it was a pity so fine a little fellow as myself should be a slave for life. He said it was a shame to hold me. They both advised me to run away to the north; that I should find friends there, and that I should be free. I pretended not to be interested in what they said, and treated them as if I did not understand them; for I feared they might be treacherous. White men have been known to encourage slaves to escape, and then, to get the reward, catch them and return them to their masters. I was afraid that these seemingly good men might use me so; but I nevertheless remembered their advice, and from that time I resolved to run away. I looked forward to a time at which it would be safe for me to escape. I was too young to think of doing so immediately; besides, I wished to learn how to write, as I might have occasion to write my own pass. I consoled myself with the hope that I should one day find a good chance. Meanwhile, I would learn to write.

The idea as to how I might learn to write was suggested to me by being in Durgin and Bailey’s ship-yard, and frequently seeing the ship carpenters, after hewing, and getting a piece of timber ready for use, write on the timber the name of that part of the ship for which it was intended. When a piece of timber was intended for the larboard side, it would be marked thus—“L.” When a piece was for the starboard side, it would be marked thus—“S.” A piece for the larboard side forward, would be marked thus—“L. F.” When a piece was for starboard side forward, it would be marked thus—“S. F.” For larboard aft, it would be marked thus—“L. A.” For starboard aft, it would be marked thus—“S. A.” I soon learned the names of these letters, and for what they were intended when placed upon a piece of timber in the ship-yard. I immediately commenced

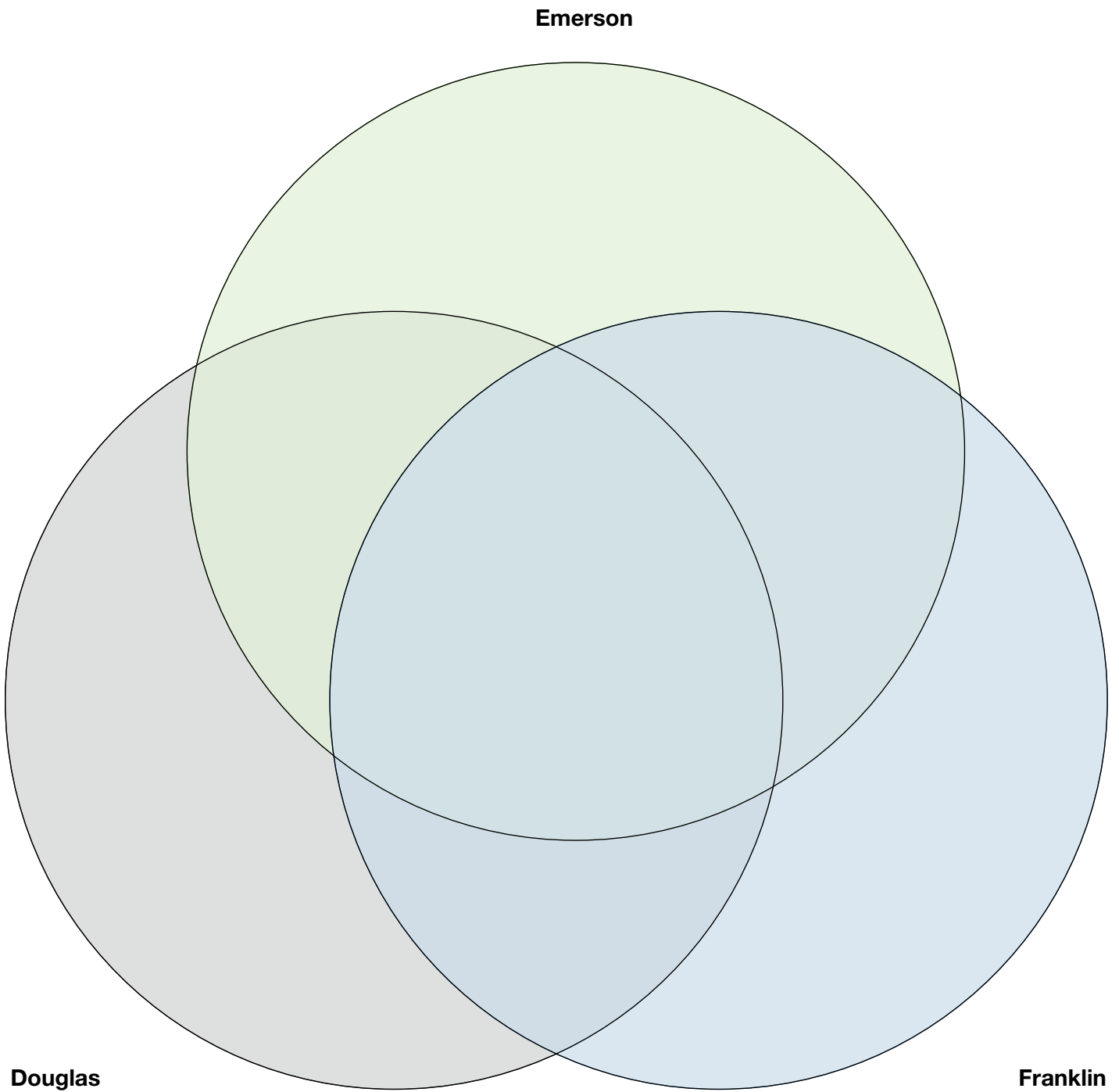
copying them, and in a short time was able to make the four letters named. After that, when I met with any boy who I knew could write, I would tell him I could write as well as he. The next word would be, "I don't believe you. Let me see you try it." I would then make the letters which I had been so fortunate as to learn, and ask him to beat that. In this way I got a good many lessons in writing, which it is quite possible I should never have gotten in any other way. During this time, my copy-book was the board fence, brick wall, and pavement; my pen and ink was a lump of chalk. With these, I learned mainly how to write. I then commenced and continued copying the Italics in Webster's Spelling Book, until I could make them all without looking on the book. By this time, my little Master Thomas had gone to school, and learned how to write, and had written over a number of copy-books. These had been brought home, and shown to some of our near neighbors, and then laid aside. My mistress used to go to class meeting at the Wilk Street meetinghouse every Monday afternoon, and leave me to take care of the house. When left thus, I used to spend the time in writing in the spaces left in Master Thomas's copy-book, copying what he had written. I continued to do this until I could write a hand very similar to that of Master Thomas. Thus, after a long, tedious effort for years, I finally succeeded in learning how to write.

## Directions:

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Once you have completed your work, your group will report out on both your findings related to the author's agreement and/or disagreement with Carr, as well as your rhetorical précis. As each group is making its presentation, complete the Venn diagram on the next page.

Note the main ideas of each author in the appropriate circle using the rhetorical précis written by each group. Note where the authors agree and/or disagree in the shaded areas. Highlight points in all three circles that show agreement with Carr, as well as points in all three circles that show disagreement with Carr.



Activity

**6** Homework

**Reading Log:** Read *The Shallows*, Chapter Five: A Medium of the Most General Nature.

As you read, take notes below. Be sure to include page numbers and cite the text as you take notes.

From pages 81-85, Carr provides a brief overview of the development of the Web as a medium. Make a list of the important points Carr makes in the space below. Has he left out anything?

The remainder of the chapter provides a discussion of the impact of the Internet on other media and on institutions. Take notes below on these impacts.

What is Carr's purpose in presenting this information? How does it add to and build on his argument to this point?

**Vocabulary from Carr’s Chapter Five, “The Deepening Page”**

**Directions:**

Choose ONE of the words from the list in the box below and ONE unfamiliar word from Chapter Five. For each of your words, complete the chart below. Remember to use the context of the word (the sentence in which it is found) to help you understand the dictionary definition.

Choice words and the page numbers on which they can be found:

- |                    |                   |                   |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| incalculable (81)  | kineographs (84)  | precipitous (87)  | tenuous (91)      |
| universal (82)     | algorithms (84)   | ubiquity (88)     | hegemony (93)     |
| rendering (83)     | compendium (85)   | inexorable (89)   | parishioners (97) |
| typographical (84) | proliferated (86) | inextricable (90) |                   |

Word from the list:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; width: 100%;"> <span>Excellent</span> <span>Fair</span> <span>Poor</span> </div>
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:	
What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Word I have chosen from Chapter Five:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  Excellent      Fair      Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:  What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

## Lesson 5

# The Internet, Books and Our Brains

### In this lesson, you will . . .

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- Read informational text so as to recognize argument, claim, and evidence structure and point of view in relation to the central claim of *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*.
- Demonstrate your ability to understand and analyze the content of Carr's argument, specifically the development of the Internet and its impact on media and other institutions, the evolution of the book into the ebook, and research on how the Internet is changing human brains.
- Apply strategies for locating words in an informational text that are unfamiliar to you and determining the meaning of those words, using both context clues and definitions.
- Learn how to embed quotes from sources into your writing.
- Write a rhetorical précis on a supplemental text.

Activity

## 1 History of the Internet

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**Directions:** Read the short *Time* magazine article “You” (found below) and annotate the article in the margins. Specifically, you should be looking for material that connects with Carr’s discussion in Chapter Five of the history of the Internet and the impact of the Internet on other media/institutions.

**Time Magazine Link and Article Text:**

(<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1570810,00.html>)

The “Great Man” theory of history is usually attributed to the Scottish philosopher Thomas Carlyle, who wrote that “the history of the world is but the biography of great men.” He believed that it is the few, the powerful and the famous who shape our collective destiny as a species. That theory took a serious beating this year.

To be sure, there are individuals we could blame for the many painful and disturbing things that happened in 2006. The conflict in Iraq only got bloodier and more entrenched. A vicious skirmish erupted between Israel and Lebanon. A war dragged on in Sudan. A tin-pot dictator in North Korea got the Bomb, and the President of Iran wants to go nuclear too. Meanwhile nobody fixed global warming, and Sony didn’t make enough PlayStation3s.

But look at 2006 through a different lens and you’ll see another story, one that isn’t about conflict or great men. It’s a story about community and collaboration on a scale never seen before. It’s about the cosmic compendium of knowledge Wikipedia and the million-channel people’s network YouTube and the online metropolis MySpace. It’s about the many wresting power from the few and helping one another for nothing and how that will not only change the world, but also change the way the world changes.

The tool that makes this possible is the World Wide Web. Not the Web that Tim Berners-Lee hacked together (15 years ago, according to Wikipedia) as a way for scientists to share research. It’s not even the overhyped dotcom Web of the late 1990s. The new Web is a very different thing. It’s a tool for bringing together the small contributions of millions of people and making them matter. Silicon Valley consultants call it Web 2.0, as if it were a new version of some old software. But it’s really a revolution. And we are so ready for it. We’re ready to balance our diet of predigested news with raw feeds from Baghdad and Boston and Beijing. You can learn more about how Americans live just by looking at the backgrounds of YouTube videos—those rumpled bedrooms and toy-strewn basement rec rooms—than you could from 1,000 hours of network television.

And we didn’t just watch, we also worked. Like crazy. We made Facebook profiles and Second Life avatars and reviewed books at Amazon and recorded podcasts. We blogged about our candidates losing and wrote songs about getting dumped. We camcordered bombing runs and built open-source software.

America loves its solitary geniuses—its Einsteins, its Edisons, its Jobses—but those lonely dreamers may have to learn to play with others. Car companies are running open design contests. Reuters is carrying blog postings alongside its regular news feed. Microsoft is working overtime to fend off user-created Linux. We’re looking at an explosion of productivity and innovation, and it’s just getting started, as millions of minds that would otherwise have drowned in obscurity get backhauled into the global intellectual economy. Who are these

people? Seriously, who actually sits down after a long day at work and says, I'm not going to watch *Lost* tonight. I'm going to turn on my computer and make a movie starring my pet iguana? I'm going to mash up 50 Cent's vocals with Queen's instrumentals? I'm going to blog about my state of mind or the state of the nation or the *steak-frites* at the new bistro down the street? Who has that time and that energy and that passion?

The answer is, you do. And for seizing the reins of the global media, for founding and framing the new digital democracy, for working for nothing and beating the pros at their own game, *Times's* Person of the Year for 2006 is you.

Sure, it's a mistake to romanticize all this any more than is strictly necessary. Web 2.0 harnesses the stupidity of crowds as well as its wisdom. Some of the comments on YouTube make you weep for the future of humanity just for the spelling alone, never mind the obscenity and the naked hatred.

But that's what makes all this interesting. Web 2.0 is a massive social experiment, and like any experiment worth trying, it could fail. There's no road map for how an organism that's not a bacterium lives and works together on this planet in numbers in excess of 6 billion. But 2006 gave us some ideas. This is an opportunity to build a new kind of international understanding, not politician to politician, great man to great man, but citizen to citizen, person to person. It's a chance for people to look at a computer screen and really, genuinely wonder who's out there looking back at them. Go on. Tell us you're not just a little bit curious.

Activity

## 2 Another Perspective

**Directions:** Read the following blog post, written by Clay Shirky, and write a rhetorical précis for it in the space provided below. Include an MLA citation for this text.

Clay Shirky blog post:

<http://www.shirky.com/weblog/2009/03/newspapers-and-thinking-the-unthinkable/>.

### **Newspapers and Thinking the Unthinkable**

Back in 1993, the Knight-Ridder newspaper chain began investigating piracy of Dave Barry's popular column, which was published by the Miami Herald and syndicated widely. In the course of tracking down the sources of unlicensed distribution, they found many things, including the copying of his column to alt.fan.dave\_barry on usenet; a 2000-person strong mailing list also reading pirated versions; and a teenager in the Midwest who was doing some of the copying himself, because he loved Barry's work so much he wanted everybody to be able to read it.

One of the people I was hanging around with online back then was Gordy Thompson, who managed Internet services at the New York Times. I remember Thompson saying something to the effect of "When a 14 year-old kid can blow up your business in his spare time, not because he hates you but because he loves you, then you got a problem." I think about that conversation a lot these days.

The problem newspapers face isn't that they didn't see the Internet coming. They not only saw it miles off, they figured out early on that they needed a plan to deal with it, and during the early 90s they came up with not just one plan but several. One was to partner with companies like America Online, a fast-growing subscription service that was less chaotic than the open Internet. Another plan was to educate the public about the behaviors required of them by copyright law. New payment models such as micro-payments were proposed. Alternatively, they could pursue the profit margins enjoyed by radio and TV, if they became purely ad-supported. Still another plan was to convince tech firms to make their hardware and software less capable of sharing, or to partner with the businesses running data networks to achieve the same goal. Then there was the nuclear option: sue copyright infringers directly, making an example of them.

As these ideas were articulated, there was intense debate about the merits of various scenarios. Would DRM or walled gardens work better? Shouldn't we try a carrot-and-stick approach, with education and prosecution? And so on. In all this conversation, there was one scenario that was widely regarded as unthinkable, a scenario that didn't get much discussion in the nation's newsrooms, for the obvious reason.

The unthinkable scenario unfolded something like this: The ability to share content wouldn't shrink, it would grow. Walled gardens would prove unpopular. Digital advertising would reduce inefficiencies, and therefore profits. Dislike of micropayments would prevent widespread use. People would resist being educated to act against their own desires. Old habits of advertisers and readers would not transfer online. Even ferocious litigation would be inadequate to constrain massive, sustained law-breaking. (Prohibition redux.) Hardware and software vendors would not regard copyright holders as allies, nor would they regard customers as enemies. DRM's requirement that the attacker be

allowed to decode the content would be an insuperable flaw. And, per Thompson, suing people who love something so much they want to share it would piss them off.

Revolutions create a curious inversion of perception. In ordinary times, people who do no more than describe the world around them are seen as pragmatists, while those who imagine fabulous alternative futures are viewed as radicals. The last couple of decades haven't been ordinary, however. Inside the papers, the pragmatists were the ones simply looking out the window and noticing that the real world increasingly resembled the unthinkable scenario. These people were treated as if they were barking mad. Meanwhile the people spinning visions of popular walled gardens and enthusiastic micropayment adoption, visions unsupported by reality, were regarded not as charlatans but saviors.

When reality is labeled unthinkable, it creates a kind of sickness in an industry. Leadership becomes faith-based, while employees who have the temerity to suggest that what seems to be happening is in fact happening are herded into Innovation Departments, where they can be ignored *en bloc*. This shunting aside of the realists in favor of the fabulists has different effects on different industries at different times. One of the effects on the newspapers is that many of their most passionate defenders are unable, even now, to plan for a world in which the industry they knew is visibly going away.

\* \* \*

The curious thing about the various plans hatched in the '90s is that they were, at base, all the same plan: "Here's how we're going to preserve the old forms of organization in a world of cheap perfect copies!" The details differed, but the core assumption behind all imagined outcomes (save the unthinkable one) was that the organizational form of the newspaper, as a general-purpose vehicle for publishing a variety of news and opinion, was basically sound, and only needed a digital facelift. As a result, the conversation has degenerated into the enthusiastic grasping at straws, pursued by skeptical responses.

"The Wall Street Journal has a paywall, so we can too!" (Financial information is one of the few kinds of information whose recipients don't want to share.) "Micropayments work for iTunes, so they will work for us!" (Micropayments work only where the provider can avoid competitive business models.) "The New York Times should charge for content!" (They've tried, with QPass and later TimesSelect.) "Cook's Illustrated and Consumer Reports are doing fine on subscriptions!" (Those publications forgo ad revenues; users are paying not just for content but for unimpeachability.) "We'll form a cartel!" (...and hand a competitive advantage to every ad-supported media firm in the world.)

Round and round this goes, with the people committed to saving newspapers demanding to know "If the old model is broken, what will work in its place?" To which the answer is: Nothing. Nothing will work. There is no general model for newspapers to replace the one the Internet just broke.

With the old economics destroyed, organizational forms perfected for industrial production have to be replaced with structures optimized for digital data. It makes increasingly less sense even to talk about a publishing industry, because the core publishing solves—the incredible difficulty, complexity, and expense of making something available to the public—has stopped being a problem.

\* \* \*

Elizabeth Eisenstein's magisterial treatment of Gutenberg's invention, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, opens with a recounting of her research into the early history of the printing press. She was able to find many descriptions of life in the early 1400s, the era before movable type. Literacy was limited, the Catholic Church was the pan-European political force, Mass was in Latin, and the average book was the Bible. She was also able to find endless descriptions of life in the late 1500s, after Gutenberg's invention had started to spread. Literacy was on the rise, as were books written in contemporary languages, Copernicus had published his epochal work on astronomy, and Martin Luther's use of the press to reform the Church was upending both religious and political stability.

What Eisenstein focused on, though, was how many historians ignored the transition from one era to the other. To describe the world before or after the spread of print was child's play; those dates were safely distanced from upheaval. But what was happening in 1500? The hard question Eisenstein's book asks is "How did we get from the world before the printing press to the world after it? What was the revolution itself like?"

Chaotic, as it turns out. The Bible was translated into local languages; was this an educational boon or the work of the devil? Erotic novels appeared, prompting the same set of questions. Copies of Aristotle and Galen circulated widely, but direct encounter with the relevant texts revealed that the two sources clashed, tarnishing faith in the Ancients. As novelty spread, old institutions seemed exhausted while new ones seemed untrustworthy; as a result, people almost literally didn't know what to think. If you can't trust Aristotle, who can you trust?

During the wrenching transition to print, experiments were only revealed in retrospect to be turning points. Aldus Manutius, the Venetian printer and publisher, invented the smaller octavo volume along with italic type. What seemed like a minor change — take a book and shrink it — was in retrospect a key innovation in the democratization of the printed word. As books became cheaper, more portable, and therefore more desirable, they expanded the market for all publishers, heightening the value of literacy still further.

That is what real revolutions are like. The old stuff gets broken faster than the new stuff is put in its place. The importance of any given experiment isn't apparent at the moment it appears; big changes stall, small changes spread. Even the revolutionaries can't predict what will happen. Agreements on all sides that core institutions must be protected are rendered meaningless by the very people doing the agreeing. (Luther and the Church both insisted, for years, that whatever else happened, no one was talking about a schism.) Ancient social bargains, once disrupted, can neither be mended nor quickly replaced, since any such bargain takes decades to solidify.

And so it is today. When someone demands to know how we are going to replace newspapers, they are really demanding to be told that we are not living through a revolution. They are demanding to be told that old systems won't break before new systems are in place. They are demanding to be told that ancient social bargains aren't in peril, that core institutions will be spared, that new methods of spreading information will improve previous practice rather than upending it. They are demanding to be lied to.

There are fewer and fewer people who can convincingly tell such a lie.

\* \* \*

If you want to know why newspapers are in such trouble, the most salient fact is this: Printing presses are terrifically expensive to set up and to run. This bit of economics,

normal since Gutenberg, limits competition while creating positive returns to scale for the press owner, a happy pair of economic effects that feed on each other. In a notional town with two perfectly balanced newspapers, one paper would eventually generate some small advantage—a breaking story, a key interview—at which point both advertisers and readers would come to prefer it, however slightly. That paper would in turn find it easier to capture the next dollar of advertising, at lower expense, than the competition. This would increase its dominance, which would further deepen those preferences, repeat chorus. The end result is either geographic or demographic segmentation among papers, or one paper holding a monopoly on the local mainstream audience.

For a long time, longer than anyone in the newspaper business has been alive in fact, print journalism has been intertwined with these economics. The expense of printing created an environment where Wal-Mart was willing to subsidize the Baghdad bureau. This wasn't because of any deep link between advertising and reporting, nor was it about any real desire on the part of Wal-Mart to have their marketing budget go to international correspondents. It was just an accident. Advertisers had little choice other than to have their money used that way, since they didn't really have any other vehicle for display ads.

The old difficulties and costs of printing forced everyone doing it into a similar set of organizational models; it was this similarity that made us regard Daily Racing Form and L'Osservatore Romano as being in the same business. That the relationship between advertisers, publishers, and journalists has been ratified by a century of cultural practice doesn't make it any less accidental.

The competition-deflecting effects of printing cost got destroyed by the Internet, where everyone pays for the infrastructure, and then everyone gets to use it. And when Wal-Mart, and the local Maytag dealer, and the law firm hiring a secretary, and that kid down the block selling his bike, were all able to use that infrastructure to get out of their old relationship with the publisher, they did. They'd never really signed up to fund the Baghdad bureau anyway.

\* \* \*

Print media does much of society's heavy journalistic lifting, from flooding the zone—covering every angle of a huge story—to the daily grind of attending the City Council meeting, just in case. This coverage creates benefits even for people who aren't newspaper readers, because the work of print journalists is used by everyone from politicians to district attorneys to talk radio hosts to bloggers. The newspaper people often note that newspapers benefit society as a whole. This is true, but irrelevant to the problem at hand; “You're gonna miss us when we're gone!” has never been much of a business model. So who covers all that news if some significant fraction of the currently employed newspaper people lose their jobs?

I don't know. Nobody knows. We're collectively living through 1500, when it's easier to see what's broken than what will replace it. The Internet turns 40 this fall. Access by the general public is less than half that age. Web use, as a normal part of life for a majority of the developed world, is less than half that age. We just got here. Even the revolutionaries can't predict what will happen.

Imagine, in 1996, asking some net-savvy soul to expound on the potential of craigslist, then a year old and not yet incorporated. The answer you'd almost certainly have

gotten would be extrapolation: “Mailing lists can be powerful tools”, “Social effects are intertwining with digital networks”, blah blah blah. What no one would have told you, could have told you, was what actually happened: craigslist became a critical piece of infrastructure. Not the idea of craigslist, or the business model, or even the software driving it. Craigslist itself spread to cover hundreds of cities and has become a part of public consciousness about what is now possible. Experiments are only revealed in retrospect to be turning points.

In craigslist’s gradual shift from ‘interesting if minor’ to ‘essential and transformative’, there is one possible answer to the question “If the old model is broken, what will work in its place?” The answer is: Nothing will work, but everything might. Now is the time for experiments, lots and lots of experiments, each of which will seem as minor at launch as craigslist did, as Wikipedia did, as octavo volumes did.

Journalism has always been subsidized. Sometimes it’s been Wal-Mart and the kid with the bike. Sometimes it’s been Richard Mellon Scaife. Increasingly, it’s you and me, donating our time. The list of models that are obviously working today, like Consumer Reports and NPR, like ProPublica and WikiLeaks, can’t be expanded to cover any general case, but then nothing is going to cover the general case.

Society doesn’t need newspapers. What we need is journalism. For a century, the imperatives to strengthen journalism and to strengthen newspapers have been so tightly wound as to be indistinguishable. That’s been a fine accident to have, but when that accident stops, as it is stopping before our eyes, we’re going to need lots of other ways to strengthen journalism instead.

When we shift our attention from ‘save newspapers’ to ‘save society’, the imperative changes from ‘preserve the current institutions’ to ‘do whatever works.’ And what works today isn’t the same as what used to work.

We don’t know who the Aldus Manutius of the current age is. It could be Craig Newmark, or Caterina Fake. It could be Martin Nisenholtz, or Emily Bell. It could be some 19 year old kid few of us have heard of, working on something we won’t recognize as vital until a decade hence. Any experiment, though, designed to provide new models for journalism is going to be an improvement over hiding from the real, especially in a year when, for many papers, the unthinkable future is already in the past.

For the next few decades, journalism will be made up of overlapping special cases. Many of these models will rely on amateurs as researchers and writers. Many of these models will rely on sponsorship or grants or endowments instead of revenues. Many of these models will rely on excitable 14 year olds distributing the results. Many of these models will fail. No one experiment is going to replace what we are now losing with the demise of news on paper, but over time, the collection of new experiments that do work might give us the journalism we need.

**Rhetorical Précis**

Activity

### 3 Taking Notes from Text

**Reading Log:** *The Shallows*, Chapter Six: The Very Image of a Book.

**“The Internet is changing the way people read and write books.”**

On this page, take notes on evidence provided by Carr that supports the above statement, using the key words strategy. Provide page numbers and use quotation marks for the quotes you use.

**Key words:**

**Quotes, page numbers, other information:**

### Vocabulary from Carr's Chapter Six, "The Very Image of a Book"

#### Directions:

Choose ONE of the words from the list in the box below and ONE unfamiliar word from Chapter Six. For each of your words, complete the chart below. Remember to use the context of the word (the sentence in which it is found) to help you understand the dictionary definition.

Choice words and the page numbers on which they can be found:

robust (99)	linearity (104)	anomaly (108)
pixels (100)	hybrids (105)	hierarchical (111)
artifacts (102)	asynchronous (106)	outré (111)
obsolescence (102)	milieu (107)	kaleidoscopic (112)

Word from the list:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  Excellent      Fair      Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:	
What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Word I have chosen from Chapter Six:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  Excellent      Fair      Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:  What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Activity

### 3 Taking Notes from Text

**Reading Log:** Read *The Shallows*, Chapter Seven: The Juggler’s Brain and “a digression: on the buoyancy of IQ scores.”

On page 175, Carr writes, “Dozens of studies by psychologists, neurobiologists, educators, and Web designers point to the same conclusion: when we go online, we enter an environment that promotes cursory reading, hurried and distracted thinking, and superficial learning.”

Use the chart below to take notes on the evidence Carr provides and the “so what” of each piece of evidence. An example is provided for you, to help you get started. Be sure to cite page numbers.

Evidence	“So What?”
Research by Ap Dijksterhuis (page 119).	Time away from a problem can help us make better decisions about the problem.

Based on your reading of this chapter and “a digression,” answer the following questions:

What are the differences between working memory and long-term memory?

How is the Internet changing our brains?

Are there any positives to these changes?

What is the Flynn effect and why might it be important in Carr’s argument?

### Vocabulary from Carr's Chapter Seven, "The Juggler's Brain"

#### Directions:

Choose ONE of the words from the list in the box below and ONE unfamiliar word from Chapter Seven. For each of your words, complete the chart below. Remember to use the context of the word (the sentence in which it is found) to help you understand the dictionary definition.

Choice words and the page numbers on which they can be found:

fortitude (115)	strenuous (122)	hypermedia (129)	skimming (136)
somatosensory (116)	schemas (124)	attentional (131)	trajectory (138)
interactivity (118)	extraneous (125)	influx (132)	optimizing (140)
cacophony (119)	materiality (126)	verbiage (135)	reverberate (141)
naïve (121)	hypertext (127)		

Word from the list:	My understanding of this word is (check one):
	Excellent      Fair      Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:	
What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Word I have chosen from Chapter Seven:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  Excellent      Fair      Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:  What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Activity

## 4 Books and Our Brains

### Choosing Evidence

**Directions:** Work with a small group or partner, using both the central text and your reading logs to choose the most convincing evidence that Carr presents to support this statement: “**The Internet is changing the way people read and write books.**” Develop at least two counterarguments for Carr’s thesis in this chapter.

Write a sentence in which a quote from Carr is embedded in the space below.

Activity

## 6 Understanding Algorithms

### Understanding Algorithms

*algorithm* in Chapter Five (page 84):

“The network’s ability to handle audio streams was aided by the development of software algorithms, such as the one used to produce MP3 files, that erase from music and other recordings sounds that are hard for the human ear to hear.”

*algorithm* in the first paragraph of Chapter Eight (page 149):

“By breaking down each job into a sequence of small steps and then testing different ways of performing them, he created a set of precise instructions—an ‘algorithm,’ we might say today—for how each worker should work.”

*algorithm* according to Dictionary.com:

“a set of rules for solving a problem in a finite number of steps.”

#### Sample Sentence:

“As soon as my mother taught me the algorithm for balancing a checkbook, I was able to balance my own checkbook with few problems.”

**Directions:** In the space below, write an original sentence using the word *algorithm*, based on the information about the word that we have received.

Activity

## 6 Homework

**Reading Log:** Read *The Shallows*, Chapter Eight: The Church of Google

As you read this chapter, take notes on the information provided in this portion of Carr’s argument, and answer the questions that follow. Be sure to provide page numbers and quotes with citations.

### Main Points

Taylorism (pages 149-150)

### More Information

a set of precise instructions, or an algorithm, that promotes efficient factory production

**Vocabulary from Carr’s Chapter Eight, “The Church of Google”**

**Directions:**

Choose ONE of the words from the list in the box below and ONE unfamiliar word from Chapter Eight. For each of your words, complete the chart below. Remember to use the context of the word (the sentence in which it is found) to help you understand the dictionary definition.

Choice words and the page numbers on which they can be found:

- |                    |                     |                         |                     |
|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| choreography (149) | lucrative (155)     | digitized (164)         | embryonic (172)     |
| optimization (150) | brutish (157)       | Transcendentalist (166) | Taylorist (173)     |
| permutations (151) | ethereal (157)      | dissonance (167)        | imperialistic (174) |
| aesthetic (151)    | complementary (160) | perpetual (168)         | incubating (175)    |
| analogy (153)      | infringement (162)  | memex (169)             | fallacy (176)       |
| largesse (155)     | laudable (163)      | malevolent (171)        |                     |

Word from the list:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; width: 100%;"> <span>Excellent</span> <span>Fair</span> <span>Poor</span> </div>
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:	
What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Word I have chosen from Chapter Eight:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  Excellent          Fair          Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:  What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

What is “Taylorism” and how does it apply to Google?

What seems to be Carr’s perspective on Google’s effort to digitize all published books?

How do you know what his perspective is?

What seems to be Carr's perspective on artificial intelligence (AI)?

How do you know what his perspective is?

## Lesson 6

# The Alienating Potential of Technology

### In this lesson, you will . . .

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- Read informational text so as to recognize argument, claim, and evidence structure and point of view in relation to the central claim of *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*.
- Demonstrate your ability to understand and analyze the content of Carr's argument, specifically the impact of Taylorism on Google, distinguishing between human and computer memory and the potential for alienation inherent in technology use.
- Demonstrate your ability to apply strategies for locating words in an informational text that are unfamiliar to you and determining the meaning of those words, using both context clues and dictionaries. Learn how to embed quotes from sources into your writing.
- Build on your knowledge of synthesis by writing and revising a synthesis paragraph.
- Write a rhetorical précis on a supplemental text.

Activity

**1** Synthesis Writing

**Writing a Synthesis Paragraph**

**Directions:** With a partner or small group, use your reading log for Chapter Eight and the text itself to write one paragraph that synthesizes the strongest evidence that Carr uses in Chapter Eight to support the following argument about Google:

*“Google is neither God nor Satan, and if there are shadows in the Googleplex, they’re no more than the delusions of grandeur. What’s disturbing about the company’s founders is not their boyish desire to create an amazingly cool machine that will be able to outthink its creators, but the pinched conception of the human mind that gives rise to such a desire” (page 176).*

Write your synthesis paragraph in the space below.

## The Evolution From Linear Thought To Networked Thought by Scott Karp

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**Directions:** Read the following blog post by Scott Karp entitled, “The Evolution from Linear Thought to Networked Thought.” As you read, annotate the article. After you have read and marked up the reading, write a rhetorical précis for it in the space below. Be sure to include an MLA citation.

February 9, 2008

I was thinking last night about books and why I don’t read them anymore—I was a lit major in college, and used to be voracious book reader. What happened?

I was also thinking about the panel I organized for the O’Reilly TOC conference on Blogs as Books, Books as Blogs—do I do all my reading online because I like blogs better than books now? That doesn’t seem meaningful on the face of it.

Then I read this really interesting post by Evan Schnittman at the OUP Blog about why he uses ebooks only for convenience but actually prefers to read in print.

So do I do all my reading online because it’s more convenient? Well, it is, but it’s not as if I don’t have opportunities to read books. (And I do read a lot of Disney Princess books to my daughter.)

But the convenience argument seems to float on the surface of a deeper issue—there’s something about the print vs. online dialectic that always seemed superficial to me. Books, newspapers, and other print media are carefully laid out. Online content like blogs are shoot from the hip. Books are linear and foster concentration and focus, while the Web, with all its hyperlinks, is kinetic, scattered, all over the place.

I’ve heard many times online reading cast in the pejorative. Does my preference for online reading mean I’ve become more scattered and disorganized in my reading?

I’ve also spent a lot of time thinking and talking recently about how understanding the future media on the Web is so counterintuitive from the perspective of traditional media—about the challenge of making the leap from thinking about linear distribution to network effects.

After reading Evan’s post and struggling with the convenience argument, I read this Silicon Alley post speculating on a possible lack of demand for ebooks, despite the Kindle reportedly selling well. If I’m such a digital guy, then why do I have no interest in ebooks?

I was eating some peanut butter last night... and then suddenly something clicked. (Don’t know if the peanut butter caused it.)

What if I do all my reading on the Web not so much because the way I read has changed, i.e. I’m just seeking convenience, but because the way I THINK has changed?

What if the networked nature of content on the Web has changed not just how I consume information but how I process it?

What if I no longer have the patience to read a book because it’s too.... linear.

We still retain an 18th Century bias towards linear thought. Non-linear thought—like online media consumption—is still typically characterized in the pejorative: scattered, unfocused, undisciplined.

Dumb.

But just look at Google, which arguably kept our engagement with the sea of content on the Web from descending into chaos. Google's PageRank algorithm is the antithesis of linearity thinking—it's pured networked thought.

Google can find relevant content on the Web because it doesn't "think" in a linear fashion—it takes all of our thoughts, as expressed in links, and looks at them as a network. If you could follow Google's algorithm in real time, it would seem utterly chaotic, but the result is extremely coherent.

When I read online, I constantly follow links from one item to the next, often forgetting where I started. Sometimes I backtrack to one content "node" and jump off in different directions. There are nodes that I come back to repeatedly, like TechMeme and Google, only to start down new branches of the network.

So doesn't this make for an incoherent reading experience? Yes, if you're thinking in a linear fashion. But I find reading on the Web is most rewarding when I'm not following a set path but rather trying to "connect the dots," thinking about ideas and trends and what it all might mean.

But am I just an outlier, or just imagining with too much peanut butter on the brain some new networked thinking macro trend?

Then I remembered—or rather arrived at in nonlinear fashion—a contrarian piece in the Guardian about an NEA study that bemoaned declines in reading and reading skills. The piece points out the study's fatal flaw—that it completely neglected to study online reading.

All Giola has to say about the dark matter of electronic reading is this: "Whatever the benefits of newer electronic media, they provide no measurable substitute for the intellectual and personal development initiated and sustained by frequent reading."

Technological literacy

The only reason the intellectual benefits are not measurable is that they haven't been measured yet. There have been almost no studies that have looked at the potential positive impact of electronic media. Certainly there is every reason to believe that technological literacy correlates strongly with professional success in the information age.

I challenge the NEA to track the economic status of obsessive novel readers and obsessive computer programmers over the next 10 years. Which group will have more professional success in this climate? Which group is more likely to found the next Google or Facebook? Which group is more likely to go from college into a job paying \$80,000 (£40,600)?

But the unmeasured skills of the "digital natives" are not just about technological proficiency. One of the few groups that has looked at these issues is the Pew Research Centre, which found in a 2004 study of politics and media use: "Relying on the Internet as a source of campaign information is strongly correlated with knowledge about the candidates and the campaign. This is more the case than for other types of media, even accounting for the fact that Internet users generally are better educated and more interested politically. And among young people under 30, use of the Internet to learn about the campaign has a greater impact on knowledge than does level of education."

What I'd be most curious to know is whether online reading actually has a positive impact on cognition—through ways that we perhaps cannot measure or even understand yet, particularly if we look at it with a bias towards linear thought.

Is there such a thing as networked human thought? Certainly there is among a group of people enabled by a network—but what about for an individual, processing information via the Web's network?

Perhaps this post hasn't been an entirely linear thought process—is that necessarily a bad thing?

Read more: <https://publishing2.com/2008/02/09/the-evolution-from-linear-thought-to-networked-thought/>.

Activity

**2 Homework**

**Reading Log:** *The Shallows*, Chapter Nine: Search, Memory and “a digression: on the writing of this book.” Take notes on your reading in the space below.

In pages 177-182, Carr writes about memory, both human memory and computer memory. For each of the references Carr makes, describe what he is saying about memory. An example is provided for you in the space below.

**Key words:**

**Quotes, page numbers, other information:**

Shakespeare (page 178)

Hamlet says memory is “the book and volume of my brain.”

Read the first full paragraph on page 182. Write a one-sentence summary of Carr’s concern about human memory and computer memory.

After reading the remainder of Chapter Nine (through page 197), write a paragraph explaining how Carr sees the difference between human memory and computer memory, as well as the impact of “outsourcing memory” on our brains.

### Vocabulary from Carr's Chapter Nine, "Search, Memory"

#### Directions:

Choose ONE of the words from the list in the box below and ONE unfamiliar word from Chapter Nine. For each of your words, complete the chart below. Remember to use the context of the word (the sentence in which it is found) to help you understand the dictionary definition.

Choice words and the page numbers on which they can be found:

- |                     |                     |                 |
|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| proliferation (177) | capacious (182)     | conundrum (189) |
| synthesis (179)     | retrograde (183)    | ethereal (193)  |
| crucible (179)      | consolidation (184) | crux (196)      |
| obsolete (181)      | hippocampus (188)   |                 |

Word from the list:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  Excellent      Fair      Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:	
What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Word I have chosen from Chapter Nine:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  Excellent          Fair          Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:  What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

Activity

### 3 Introducing the Concept of Alienation

#### Examining Chapter Nine

**Directions:** Working with a small group or partner, you will examine Chapter Nine. With the other members of your group, you should use the space below to:

- a) copy a quote from Chapter Nine that you believe most clearly states Carr’s argument within the chapter as a whole; and
- b) create an outline of Carr’s evidence presented in the chapter.

Quote from Chapter Nine:

Outline of Evidence:

### **Understanding *Alienation***

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*alienation* in Chapter 10 (page 211):

“The price we pay to assume technology’s power is alienation. The toll can be particularly high with our intellectual technologies. The tools of the mind amplify and in turn numb the most intimate, the most human, of our natural capacities—those for reason, perception, memory, emotion” (Carr 211).

*alienation*:

“the state or experience of being isolated from a group or an activity to which one should belong or in which one should be involved.”

**Sample Sentence:**

“The *alienation* my parents experienced from their family after their marriage caused my brothers and me to never know or understand our grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins.”

In the space below, write an original sentence using the word *alienation*, based on the information about the word that we have received.

Activity

**3** Homework

**Reading Log:** Read *The Shallows*, Chapter 10: A Thing Like Me and the Epilogue. Take notes on your reading in the space below.

In pages 201-208, Carr describes ELIZA, the computer program developed by Joseph Weizenbaum. What is ELIZA, and why does Carr include ELIZA in this section?

In the space below, take notes on evidence in the remainder of the chapter that you find for Carr's statement that "Alienation ... is the inevitable by-product of the use of technology" (page 212).

### Vocabulary from Carr's Chapter 10, "A Thing Like Me"

#### Directions:

Choose ONE of the words from the list in the box below and ONE unfamiliar word from Chapter 10. For each of your words, complete the chart below. Remember to use the context of the word (the sentence in which it is found) to help you understand the dictionary definition.

Choice words and the page numbers on which they can be found:

parsing (201)	apostate (208)	consensus (217)
penumbra (202)	lucidity (209)	perusal (218)
banal (203)	dexterity (210)	erosion (220)
plausibility (206)	alienation (211)	empathizing (221)
tautology (207)	cybernetic (214)	

Word from the list:	My understanding of this word is (check one):		
	Excellent	Fair	Poor
Context (including page number):			
Dictionary definition:			
What in the world does that mean?			
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:			

Word I have chosen from Chapter 10:	My understanding of this word is (check one):  Excellent      Fair      Poor
Context (including page number):	
Dictionary definition:  What in the world does that mean?	
My sense of the word, including the context and the dictionary definition, in my own words:	

## Lesson 7

# Drafting and Presentation

### In this lesson, you will . . .

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- Complete preparatory work toward the synthesis essay and write a draft of a synthesis essay.
- Use your synthesis essay draft to make a presentation to the class using your thesis statement and relevant evidence.
- Receive peer and teacher feedback on your presentation and teacher feedback on your draft.

Activity

## 1 Preparatory Work for Synthesis Essay

### Synthesis Essay Assignment

How is the exponential increase of information that we process in all forms of media affecting the way we live? After reading Nicholas Carr's *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains* and other informational texts on the impact of information technology, write a synthesis essay in which you support a thesis based on one of the following quotes from Carr's text.

Support your position with evidence from the texts.

*"With the exception of alphabets and number systems, the Net may well be the single most powerful mind-altering technology that has ever come into general use. At the very least, it's the most powerful that has come along since the book" (Carr 118).*

*"Karp, Friedman, and Davis—all well-educated men with a keenness for writing— seem fairly sanguine about the decay of their faculties for reading and concentrating. All things considered, they say, the benefits they get from using the Net—quick access to loads of information, potent searching and filtering tools, an easy way to share their opinions with a small but interested audience—make up for the loss of their ability to sit still and turn the pages of a book or magazine" (Carr 8).*

*"The price we pay to assume technology's power is alienation. The toll can be particularly high with our intellectual technologies. The tools of the mind amplify and in turn numb the most intimate, the most human, of our natural capacities—those for reason, perception, memory, emotion" (Carr 211).*

Use your best voice, academic language, and third person point of view. Incorporate at least three sources (at least one from our class discussions) to support your ideas. Include at least three direct quotes; all quotes and paraphrased information must include a parenthetical citation. The last page of your paper should be your Works Cited page. Follow all MLA guidelines for formatting and documentation.

You will also give a three-minute presentation highlighting the main ideas presented in your essay. Your presentation should:

- include your thesis statement,
- include at least three main points that support your thesis,
- include at least three pictures/charts/graphs (some visual representation) of the three main points, and
- follow all MLA guidelines for formatting and documentation.

## Evaluating Source Material

### Directions:

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Choose one of the quotes from the prompt and read through your academic notebook, highlighting any information contained there that relates to your chosen quote. Once the process of highlighting is complete, you should write a short response to the following three questions:

a) What sources do I have available for responding to this prompt?

b) What holes are there in the information that I have?

c) Where might I find additional information to fill in holes?

Activity

## 2 Writing a Sample Paragraph

### Writing a Summary Paragraph

#### Directions:

In the space below, write a summary paragraph that includes a thesis statement and sequences the key points you plan to make in your synthesis essay.

Activity

### 3 Creating an Outline

#### Creating an Outline

#### Directions:

Using the research form below, create an outline for your synthesis essay.

Idea presented in Carr (*quote on which you will base your thesis*):

**Thesis Statement:**

**Source used from class discussions** *(list using MLA format):*

**Evaluation of material** *(how/what will it contribute to your paper or support your argument):*

*How does it relate to the other information that you've found?*

**Paraphrased ideas or “direct quotes” from this source to use in paper** *(if applicable, record the page numbers where the quote is found):*

**Additional sources** *(minimum of two; use MLA format):*

**Source #2:**

**Evaluation of material** *(how/what will it contribute to your paper or support your argument?)*

*How does it relate to the other information that you've found?*

**Paraphrased ideas or “direct quotes” from this source to use in paper** *(if applicable, record the page numbers where the quote is found):*

**Source #3:**

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**Evaluation of material** *(how/what will it contribute to your paper or support your argument?)*

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*How does it relate to the other information that you've found?*

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**Paraphrased ideas or “direct quotes” from this source to use in paper** *(if applicable, record the page numbers where the quote is found):*

Activity

**5** Create and Deliver a Presentation

**Peer Feedback Form**

Name of Presenter:

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Your Name:

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How convincing for you was the evidence presented here?

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What could have made it more convincing?

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What other advice would you provide to the speaker?

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## Lesson 8

# Synthesis Writing: Final Draft

### In this lesson, you will . . .

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- Use peer and teacher feedback elicited from your presentations and teacher feedback on your draft to revise and edit your synthesis essay and turn in the final draft.

Activity

# 1 Peer Revision and Editing

## Revise and Edit the Synthesis Essay Draft

Paper's Author

Paper's Editor

**Directions:** Answer all questions to the best of your ability. Circle “Yes” or “No” for each question. You need to read the paper several times. Do not skip sentences. Do not skim. Read very closely. Even read aloud quietly, so you can hear problems. Make any changes necessary to gain a “yes” answer to all questions.

### Title:

- |     |    |   |
|-----|----|---|
| Yes | No | 1. Is there a title?  |
| Yes | No | 2. If “Yes,” is the title specific and supported by the paper?                                      |
| Yes | No | 3. Is the title centered?   |
| Yes | No | 4. The title should not be not underlined, italicized, or quoted. Did the writer do this correctly? |

### Introduction:

- |     |    |  |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | 1. Is there an attention-getter?   |
| Yes | No | 2. Is there background information about the topic?  |
| Yes | No | 3. Is there a good transition between the attention-getter and essential information?                              |
| Yes | No | 4. Is there a thesis statement? Mark the thesis statement on the paper. Put a bracket next to it on the left side. |
| Yes | No | 5. Is the thesis supported by the topic sentences throughout the paper?  |

### Body Paragraph #1

- |     |    |  |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | 1. Is there a topic sentence and is it the first or second sentence in the paragraph?  |
| Yes | No | 2. Do you introduce all quotes and paraphrases by setting up their context? This means that there might be a little summary before the quote so that the reader knows the origin of the quote or paraphrase. |
| Yes | No | 3. Do you provide citations after each quote or paraphrase?  |
| Yes | No | 4. After the quote, is there some kind of explanation of how the quote supports the topic sentence?  |

*Make sure the body paragraph does not start or end with a quote. Help your partner with transitions.*

### Body Paragraph #2

- |     |    |  |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | 1. Is there a topic sentence and is it the first or second sentence in the paragraph?  |
| Yes | No | 2. Do you introduce all quotes and paraphrases by setting up their context? This means that there might be a little summary before the quote so that the reader knows the origin of the quote or paraphrase. |
| Yes | No | 3. Do you provide citations after each quote or paraphrase?  |
| Yes | No | 4. After the quote, is there some kind of explanation of how the quote supports the topic sentence?  |

*Make sure the body paragraph does not start or end with a quote. Help your partner with transitions.*

### Body Paragraph #3

- |     |    |  |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | 1. Is there a topic sentence and is it the first or second sentence in the paragraph?  |
| Yes | No | 2. Do you introduce all quotes and paraphrases by setting up their context? This means that there might be a little summary before the quote so that the reader knows the origin of the quote or paraphrase. |
| Yes | No | 3. Do you provide citations after each quote or paraphrase?  |
| Yes | No | 4. After the quote, is there some kind of explanation of how the quote supports the topic sentence?  |

*Make sure the body paragraph does not start or end with a quote. Help your partner with transitions.*

### Body Paragraph #4

- |     |    |  |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | 1. Is there a topic sentence and is it the first or second sentence in the paragraph?  |
| Yes | No | 2. Do you introduce all quotes and paraphrases by setting up their context? This means that there might be a little summary before the quote so that the reader knows the origin of the quote or paraphrase. |
| Yes | No | 3. Do you provide citations after each quote or paraphrase?  |
| Yes | No | 4. After the quote, is there some kind of explanation of how the quote supports the topic sentence?  |

*Make sure the body paragraph does not start or end with a quote. Help your partner with transitions.*

### Subsequent Body Paragraphs

- |     |    |  |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | 1. Is there a topic sentence and is it the first or second sentence in the paragraph?  |
| Yes | No | 2. Do you introduce all quotes and paraphrases by setting up their context? This means that there might be a little summary before the quote so that the reader knows the origin of the quote or paraphrase. |
| Yes | No | 3. Do you provide citations after each quote or paraphrase?  |
| Yes | No | 4. After the quote, is there some kind of explanation of how the quote supports the topic sentence?  |

*Make sure the body paragraph does not start or end with a quote. Help your partner with transitions.*

### Conclusion:

- |     |    |  |
|-----|----|--|
| Yes | No | 1. Do you refer to the thesis in some way without directly restating it? |
| Yes | No | 2. Do you avoid introducing new information in the conclusion?           |
| Yes | No | 3. Is your concluding sentence meaningful and memorable?                 |

### Works Cited Page

- |     |    |   |
|-----|----|---|
| Yes | No | 1. Is the title "Works Cited" centered at the top?                                |
| Yes | No | 2. Have you used at least three different sources?                                |
| Yes | No | 3. Are all of your sources those required for this assignment (one book, two      |
| Yes | No | 4. Is only the first line of each source left aligned with the side of the paper? |
| Yes | No | 5. Are the sources in alphabetical order?   |
| Yes | No | 6. As much as you can tell, is each source listed in the correct format?          |
| Yes | No | 7. Is the entire page double-spaced?  |

### Grammar/Mechanics Checklist:

1. Read through the entire paper and look at all of the words that end with –s. Check and make sure that the writer didn't forget to make a possessive –s. On the paper, put 's (apostrophe s) anywhere it is needed.
2. Read through the entire paper and look for any sentence that begins with the following words: **when, because, since, if, although, after, even though, while, in order that**. First, make sure these sentences are not fragments. Second, **make sure there is a comma after the subordinate clause**.
3. Check for sentences beginning with the word **“So.”** Get rid of the word. It probably isn't needed. Do the same for sentences beginning with **“And”** or **“But.”**
4. Circle any use of the words **“you,” “your,” “me,” “I,” “we,”** and so on. Suggest how the writer can avoid these words.
5. Read through the entire paper. Mark all uses of the words **“they”** and **“their,”** and make sure that the antecedents are plural. Also check to make sure there is a clear antecedent for these words.
6. Mark all uses of the words **“this,” “that,” “these,”** or **“those.”** Remind the writer to follow these words with specific nouns.
7. Read the entire paper and make sure that all sentences make sense. Mark sentences that don't make sense and suggest how the writer can change them.
8. Read the entire paper again and make sure that all words are **spelled correctly**. Circle words that are questionable. Check for common misspelled words: *then, than, effect, affect, its, it's, their, there, to, too, two*.
9. Check all quotes. Make sure that they are not by themselves and that they have correct MLA citations. Make sure that the sentences are punctuated correctly, and make sure that the page numbers are done right.
10. Make sure that titles are properly designated by **italics**, or **quotation marks**.
11. Read through the entire paper and check every time the writer uses the word **that**. Make sure it shouldn't be **who**.
12. Check every comma in the paper, and make sure that it is not bringing together two complete sentences.
13. Check all of the following words: **and, but, so, for, or**. Make sure that there isn't a comma needed. Ask your teacher if you are not sure. If these words are bringing together two complete sentences, then use a comma before the conjunction.
14. Anytime you see a **colon (:)** or a **semi-colon (;)**, make sure that it is used correctly.
15. Read the paper one last time and make sure that there are no other mistakes that you can identify. Check for transitions, double negatives, verb forms, subject-verb agreement, and so on. Help the writer get an A.
16. Check to make sure that the entire paper is in **consistent tense** (no shifting from past to present, etc.).
17. Check all verbs ending with –ing, and make sure you can't change it. You are looking for passive verbs: some form of the verb *be* + the past participle of the verb.  
Example: “Many options *were tried* by the soldiers.” can be changed to “The soldiers *tried* many options.” Check to make sure that passive sentences couldn't be better if they were *active*.