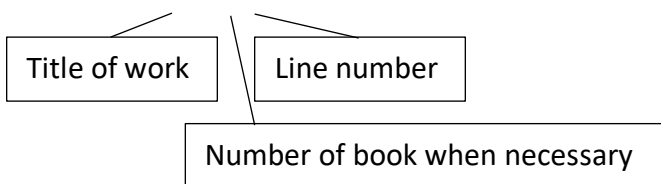


QUALITY OF WRITING MATTERS AS MUCH AS QUALITY OF ANALYSIS

FORMATTING

- All line numbers must be cited properly
 - If there is a break in lines cited-this must be properly referenced (e.g. 1.1-8, 12-14)
- Please provide paragraph breaks at each new thought or change in topic. This allows the reader time to pause and reflect on what has been said
 - New paragraphs should be indented
- Titles of sources should be in italics
 - *Od.* 2.112



- Italicize foreign words such as *nostos* and *kleos* but not proper names like Odysseus
- Use the full title of the book in sentences, only abbreviate for citations
 - I.e. In the *Iliad*, "they were stunned by the force of his words" (*Il.* 9.719).

Full title of book
in italics, but not
"the"

Full text citation

- Acceptable abbreviations for usage in line citation

<i>H.H.Ap.</i>	<i>Theog.</i>	<i>Ag.</i>	<i>Bacch.</i>
<i>H.H.Dem.</i>	<i>WD.</i>	<i>L.B.</i>	<i>Aen.</i>
<i>H.H.Herm.</i>	<i>Od.</i>	<i>Eum.</i>	<i>En. El.</i>
<i>H.H.Aphr.</i>	<i>Il.</i>	<i>O.T.</i>	

STYLE

- Avoid colloquialisms
 - "Fine" "Big" "Great"
- Avoid exaggerations, overstatements
 - "All women in Greece..." "The greatest hero of all time..."
- Avoid repetition of the same word/sentence structure/verb
 - "Then the [] characterizes; This in turn is a characteristic of..."
- Avoid poor transitions
 - "Also...also...also"
 - "Another theme...another theme...another theme..."

EVIDENCE USAGE

- Be sure the statements made are supported by the text being read. Be as specific as possible.
- Use references to other texts read in class sparingly and thoughtfully
 - The essay is not the same as an ID answer-stick to your main argument and don't jump around too much.
- Keep on point! Long, complex sentences using the passive and unnecessarily long words do not usually lead to good writing. Avoid dangling participles (see link below!).

Relevant sites to reference

- <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/>
 - A helpful tool for looking into areas of writing you may need more guidance on such as thesis statements, evidence building, conclusion construction. Some videos, some written resources.
- <https://video.newyorker.com/watch/comma-queen-dangling-participles>
 - An excellent, brief video outlining dangling participles and how to fix them. Watch this for an easy and quick way to improve writing dramatically.

THESIS EVALUATION:

Read this examples and commentary from UNC.edu's writing center, which is a helpful resource for many aspects of writing.

Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn is a great American novel.

Why is this thesis weak? Think about what the reader would expect from the essay that follows: most likely a general, appreciative summary of Twain's novel. But the question did not ask you to summarize; it asked you to analyze. Your professor is probably not interested in your opinion of the novel; instead, she wants you to think about why it's such a great novel—what do Huck's adventures tell us about life, about America, about coming of age, about race, etc.? First, the question asks you to pick an aspect of the novel that you think is important to its structure or meaning—for example, the role of storytelling, the contrasting scenes between the shore and the river, or the relationships between adults and children.



Now you write:

In Huckleberry Finn, Mark Twain develops a contrast between life on the river and life on the shore.

Here's a working thesis with potential: you have highlighted an important aspect of the novel for investigation. However, it's still not clear what your analysis will reveal. Your reader is intrigued but is still thinking, "So what? What's the point of this contrast? What does it signify?" Perhaps you are not sure yet, either. That's fine—begin to work on comparing scenes from the book and see what you discover. Free write, make lists, jot down Huck's actions and reactions. Eventually you will be able to clarify for yourself, and then for the reader, why this contrast matters.



After examining the evidence and considering your own insights, you write:

Through its contrasting river and shore scenes, Twain's Huckleberry Finn suggests that to find the true expression of American democratic ideals, one must leave "civilized" society and go back to nature.

This final thesis statement presents an interpretation of a literary work based on an analysis of its content. Of course, for the essay itself to be successful, you must now present evidence from the novel that will convince the reader of your interpretation.

Takeaways:

A strong thesis needs to be specific, defensible, and arguable.

- Tell the reader exactly what your paper is about, narrow your focus. You only have a limited number of pages to present an effective argument.
- Support your thesis with (textual) evidence.
- Do not aim at the incontrovertible: the reader must be able to agree or disagree with your thesis! Objections and counterarguments can help you improve and refine your thesis statement.
- Your draft of thesis statement can change during the writing process! Your initial draft of thesis statement is not set in stone. Let your analytical reading shape your thesis statement, not the other way around.