

Writing as Praxis: The Practical Elements of Academic Writing

LUNCH AND LEARN WORKSHOP THREE
Presented by the Center of Academic Literacy





Agenda

Introduction

Review of Workshop One and
Two

Practical Elements of Writing

Academic Grammar

Think-Pair-Share

What Does It Mean to be Critical?

To be critical means to question the assumptions and conclusions of academic authors through clear examination and analysis.

Questions to Ask While Reading

- How does the author make this argument?
- What evidence do they provide?
- Why is this significant?
- What style do they use to present the information?

Workshop One Recap: Writing Begins with Reading

What is Critical Reading?

Critical reading is reading with the purpose of critical examination of the text and its ideas. This critical examination will eventually yield a new interpretation of a primary or secondary source. Critical reading is the close, careful reading of a text that is undertaken in order to understand it fully and assess its merits. It is not simply a matter of skimming a text or reading for plot points; rather, critical reading requires that you read attentively and thoughtfully, taking into account the text's structure, purpose, and audience, among other characteristics (e.g., tone, mood, diction, etc.)

Critical reading is the process of reading texts with the purpose to understand them fully. It involves asking questions about the author's intention, the text's structure and purpose, and the meanings of individual words and phrases. Critical readers also consider the context in which a text was written and how it might be interpreted by different audiences.

Critical Writing

Critical writing is writing which analyses and evaluates information, usually from multiple sources, in order to develop an argument. A mistake many beginning writers make is to assume that everything they read is true and that they should agree with it, since it has been published in an academic text or journal. Being part of the academic community, however, means that you should be critical of **(i.e. question)** what you read, looking for reasons why it should be accepted or rejected, for example by comparing it with what other writers say about the topic, or evaluating the research methods to see if they are adequate or whether they could be improved.





The Confluence of Critical Reading and Writing

CRITICAL THINKING IS WHERE CRITICAL READING AND CRITICAL WRITING MEET IN THE CONFLUENCE OF THE COMPOSITION OF AN ARGUMENT.


Workshop Two Recap: Writing the Seminar Paper

The seminar paper is a genre specific to academic institutions. The seminar paper is a genre that is research intensive—meaning that it poses a new idea, no matter how larger or insignificant to a field of research or disciplinary study. Distinct from genres such as the review and the report, the seminar paper **does not summarize**. Instead, the seminar paper mostly uses inductive reasoning to present a new and inventive idea to a specific discipline such as Ethics, Literature, History, Theology, and Philosophy.

Moreover, it is important to note that each discipline has its own style of writing and its own expectations for the seminar paper. Thus, it is important to communicate with faculty members about their disciplinary expectations.

Thesis Statements

The thesis statement is the central claim your essay will make about your chosen topic. Since the topic area must first be described and motivated, the thesis statement is usually placed near the end of the introduction.



It is also important to note the following: Every piece of writing that you write as a student—beyond even the seminar paper—should have a clear and evidence-based thesis statement.

Writing the Seminar Paper

1. Introductions
 - Thesis statements
2. Paragraph Structure
 - Transition sentence
 - Topic sentences
 - Introducing quotes
 - Explanation
3. Progression and Development
 - Making subsequent points
4. Conclusion
 - Summarize essay and further questions



The Practical Elements of Academic Writing



Transition Sentences

- Transition sentences are used to eliminate **confusion**, introduce new information, and signal the conclusion of an essay. Transition statements can be used between sentences, paragraphs, and sections of an essay.
- They help created clarity and flow between new ideas.



How to Write a Transition Sentence

- TO WRITE A TRANSITION SENTENCE, YOU MUST BEGIN WITH A TRANSITION WORD OR PHRASE.
 - EX: Although, while, sequentially, in contrast, in comparison, etc.
- SECONDLY, IN THE SAME SENTENCE, YOU MUST PUT THE FORMER IDEA AND THE NEW IDEA IN THE SAME SENTENCE.
 - EX: While Fanon's work works almost perfectly in the minds of phenomenologists, Fanon, as a psychoexistentialist interested in the "leap," offers new ways to engage with Black diasporic literature.

TRANSITION WORDS AND PHRASES		
For argumentation: all in all finally first, second, third for example for instance for this reason however in addition in brief in short in summary in conclusion in other words nevertheless on the one hand... on the other hand well thus therefore as a result yet	To contrast: although but conversely despite even though however in contrast instead nevertheless nonetheless on the contrary on the one hand... on the other hand rather than well unlike whereas yet	To compare: first second next then later at the same time nevertheless nonetheless more before earlier after afterward more finally time markers such as then, years later, in 1957, etc.
To show cause and effect: as therefore because as a result since led to because therefore consequently	To describe: above adjacent to at the bottom at the top below below below in front of in the middle next to over under through within	To show process: first second therefore after that next then at the same time when you have finished finally until
To compare: just as... as like likewise in comparison similarly in the same way	To exemplify: another for instance it, for example specifically that is thus	To classify and divide: the first category, the second category, etc. one category, the next category, another, etc. a more important category, the most important, etc.

Topic Sentences



A topic sentence is the most important sentence in a paragraph. Sometimes referred to as a focus sentence, the topic sentence helps organize the paragraph by summarizing the information in the paragraph.



A topic sentence essentially tells readers about the rest of the paragraph. All sentences after it have to give more information about that sentence, prove it by offering facts about it, or describe it in more detail.

EX: This paragraph will examine what Fanon conceptualizes as the leap in *Wretched of the Earth*, arguing that "the leap" is not simply a political or revolutionary maneuver, but an essentially literary one with implications for Black diasporic poetic expression.

Using Quotations

All quotations must be introduced with an introduction tag:

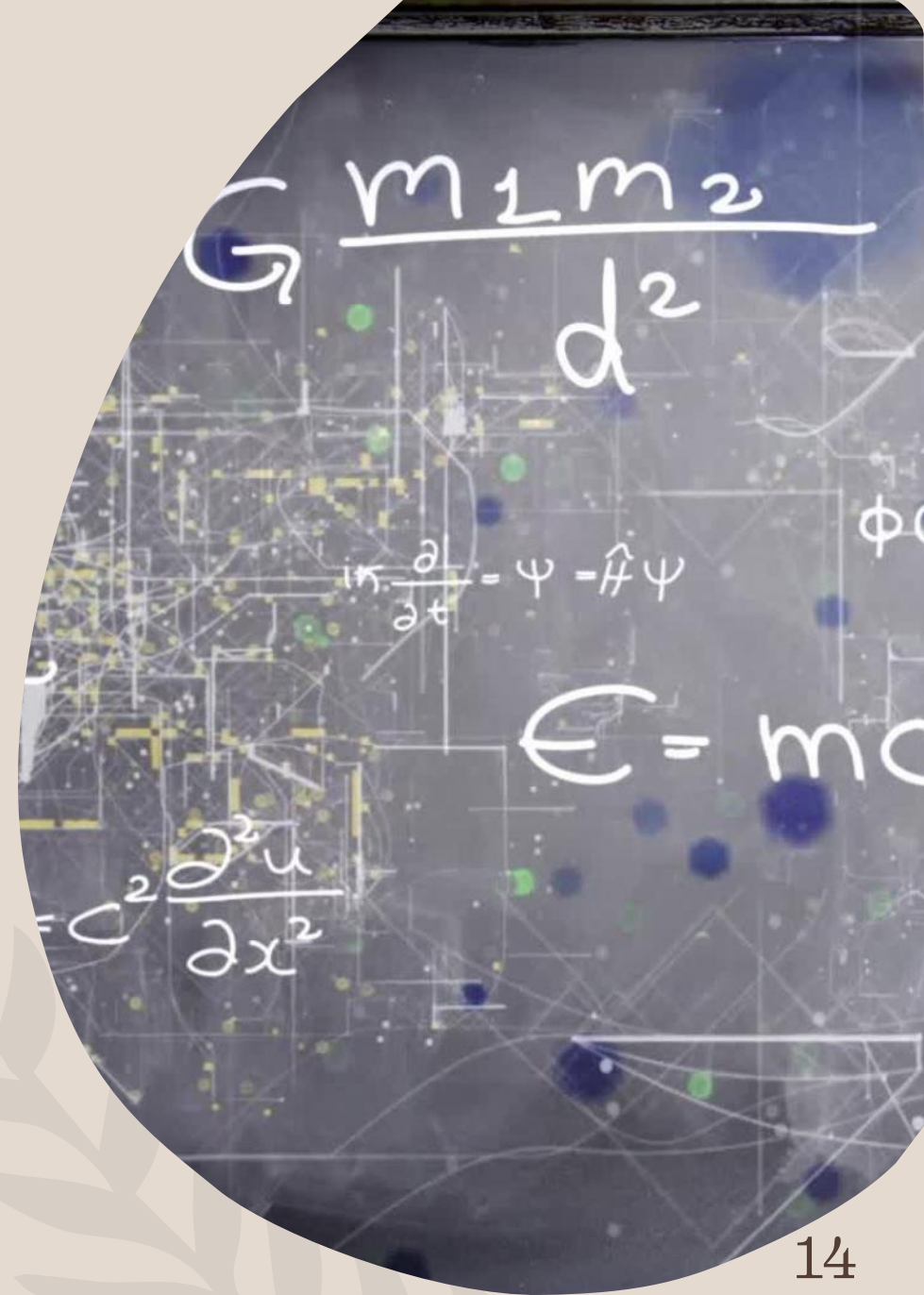
- Ex: According to Fanon, "QUOTE"; Fanon states in *Black Skins White Mask* that "QUOTE"; Disagreeing with Cesaire, Fanon writes, "QUOTE."

At no time should a quote be inserted into a paragraph without proper tagging and citation.

All punctuation goes INSIDE quotation marks.

All footnotes after the end of the quotation.

It is important to remember that a quote is an OBJECT within YOUR own sentence.



Explaining the Quote

It is best practice that quotations do not end a paragraph. Instead, your explanation or interpretation of the quote should follow, helping to make the point of your thesis statement.

- EX: When Fanon writes that he belongs irreducibly to his time, he means that the leap suspends our notions of history, that we are no longer in the functions of the telos, but somewhere beyond, leaping past the narration of history.

It is at the end of this explanation that you have sufficiently made a new point and can move onto the next thought.



Grammatical Elements of Transitions, Topic Sentences, and Quotations

1. Clauses
2. Subjects and Verbs
3. Character-doing-action

Still, it is important to know the grammatical structure of these maneuvers in order to be able to use them successfully.

Thus, you will need to know what the following are:

- Dependent Clauses
- Independent Clauses
- Introductory Phrases.

Clauses

1. Subject – the noun performing the action
2. Verb – the action being done on the object.

All clauses have BOTH a subject and a verb. There are only three key differences between the two clauses:

- **Dependent clauses** begin with an adverb or preposition and cannot stand on its own—thus why it is dependent on the independent clause.
 - o EX: While Fanon can be read as a strict phenomenologist,
- **Independent clauses**, or complete thoughts, can stand alone without the support of any other unit of meaning.
 - o EX: Fanon stands at the precipice of many philosophical and literary genres.

If you put them together, you have a clear transition/ topic sentence:

- o While Fanon can be read as a strict phenomenologist, Fanon stands at the precipice of many philosophical and literary genres.

Phrases



Unlike clauses, phrases have do not have both a subject and a verb—but instead only have a noun or a verb:

- EX: Of the exeistentialists of 20th Century French theory,

However, like dependent clauses, **a comma always follows them if they begin a sentence** as a means of attaching it to the independent clause:

- EX: Of the exeistentialists of 20th Century French theory, Fanon is by far the most defeated by the question of metaphysics.

Quotations Need the Following

1. Introduction Tag
2. Punctuatuion to be inside of the quotation marks.
3. Footnote with page number

Depending on how you use a quote, understand that **it is now an object of your senstence** and that it belongs to your argument:

- EX: In *Black Skins White Masks*, Fanon writes, "There is a zone of nonbeing. [,]" 1 which implies that the Black's experiecne is imaterial in a cicvliazation built on a metaphysics of abcense.



You Try!

Think-Pair-Share

For five minutes, write a paragraph for an assignment that you have coming up for a class.

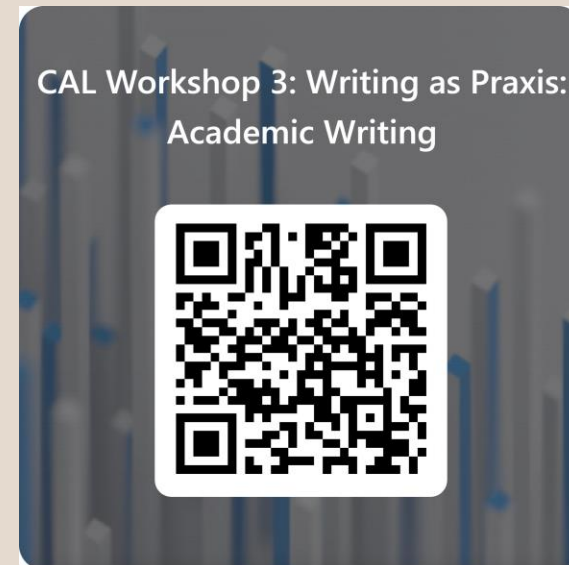


Finally

THE PRACTICAL SKILLS OF ACADEMIC WRITING REQUIRE THAT YOU EMBRACE THE LOGICAL STRUCTURE OF WESTERN ACADEMIC THINKING—WHICH IS LARGELY WITHOUT THE ASSUMPTION THAT YOUR READER SEES OR UNDERSTANDS THE TEXT AS YOU DO. BE EXPLICIT AND SPECIFIC IN EACH SENTENCE, AND YOU WILL BE SUCCESSFUL.

CAL SURVEY

Take the survey by
scanning the QR Code:



Thank you from CAL !

Robert Griffin, Director

GriffinR@ctsnet.edu

Courtney Bowden, Academic Coach

BowdenC@ctsnet.edu

Erica Hughes, Academic Coach

HughesE@ctsnet.edu



Schedule an appointment by
scanning the QR Code:

