Annotating and Active Reading:
Effectively Engaging with the Text

In order to read effectively, you need to develop a strategy that will work for you. Annotating a reading passage—writing notes on the pages of the reading selection itself—is one strategy you can use to become actively involved in what you're reading (whatever the course).

Although annotating may seem to take more time, it will benefit you in at least two ways:

1. If you have to return to the text (for example, when studying for a test or writing a paper), you won't have to reread the entire piece. Notes written within the text and in the margins can serve to remind you of important ideas.
2. When you write notes about reading selections, you develop *active* rather than *passive* reading skills. In general, when you are involved with what you read, you will better understand, remember, and engage with texts.

Here are some suggestions for annotating, or glossing, a text:

Write notes in the margin or at the top or bottom of the page. For example, jot main ideas, key summary words or phrases next to their respective paragraphs.

Circle or underline key words or phrases.

Use stars or asterisks in the margins to emphasize the most important ideas.

Pose questions in the margins to express your difference of opinion about the author's message, or put a question mark next to anything you don't understand (what teachers mean when they ask, "Any questions about last night's reading?")

Use a personal symbol (*!*, *Yes!*, *Right!*) next to anything that seems on target to you.

Write notes or questions on **Post-Its / sticky notes** and use them to mark important pages of the text. (Great for library books or for books you want to sell back at the end of the semester.)

From "I just wanna be average," Mike Rose

Ken Harvey was gasping for air. School can be a tremendously disorienting place. No matter how bad the school, you're going to encounter notions that don't fit with the assumptions and beliefs that you grew up with — maybe you'll hear these **dissonant**[1] notions from teachers, maybe from the other students, and maybe you'll read them. You'll also be thrown in with all kinds of kids from all kinds of backgrounds, and that can be unsettling — this is especially true in places of rich ethnic and linguistic mix, like the L.A. basin. You'll see a handful of students far excel you in courses that sound exotic and that are only in the curriculum of the **elite**[2]: French, physics, trigonometry. And all this is happening while you're trying to shape an identity, your body is changing, and your emotions are running wild. If you're a working-class kid in the vocational track, the options you'll have to deal with this will be constrained in certain ways: you're defined by your school as "slow"; you're placed in a curriculum that isn't designed to liberate you but to occupy you, or, if you're lucky, train you, though the training is for work the society does not esteem; other students are picking up the cues from your school and your curriculum and interacting with you in particular ways. If you're a kid like Ted Richard, you turn your back on all this and let your mind roam where it may. But youngsters like Ted are rare. What Ken and so many others do is protect themselves from such suffocating madness by taking on with a vengeance the identity implied in the vocational track. Reject the confusion and frustration by openly defining yourself as the Common Joe. Champion the average. Rely on your own good sense. Fuck this bullshit. Bullshit, of course, is everything you — and the others — fear is beyond you: books, essays, tests, academic scrambling, complexity, scientific reasoning, philosophical inquiry.

The tragedy is that you have to twist the knife in your own gray matter to make this defense work. You'll have to shut down, have to reject intellectual stimuli or diffuse them with sarcasm, have to cultivate stupidity, have to convert boredom from a malady into a way of confronting the world. Keep your vocabulary simple, act stoned when you're not or act more stoned than you are, **flaunt**[3] ignorance, materialize your dreams. It is a powerful and effective defense — it neutralizes the insult and the frustration of being a vocational kid and, when perfected, it drives teachers up the wall, a delightful secondary effect. But like all strong magic, it exacts a price.

Let me try to explain how it feels to see again and again material you should once have learned but didn't. You are given a problem. It requires you to simplify algebraic fractions or to multiply expressions containing square roots. You know this is pretty basic material because you've seen it for years. Once a teacher took some time with you, and you learned how to carry out these operations. Simple versions, anyway. But that was a year or two or more in the past, and these are more complex versions, and now you're not sure. And this, you keep telling yourself, is ninth- or even eighth-grade stuff.

Next it's a word problem. This is also old hat. The basic elements are as familiar as story characters: trains speeding so many miles per hour or shadows of buildings

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[1] **dissonant**: making or involving a combination of sounds that is unpleasant to listen to; incompatible or inconsistent (formal)

[2] **elite**: a small group of people within a larger group who have more power, social standing, wealth, or talent than the rest of the group

[3] **flaunt**: to parade yourself without shame or modesty

angling so many degrees. Maybe you know enough, have sat through enough explanations, to be able to begin setting up the problem: If one train is going this fast or "This shadow is really one line of a triangle..." "Let's see..." How did Jones do this?" "Hmmmm." "No." "No, that won't work." Your attention wavers. You wonder about other things: a football game, a dance, that cute new checker at the market. You try to focus on the problem again. You scribble on paper for a while, but the tension wins out and your attention flits elsewhere. You crumple the paper and begin daydreaming to ease the frustration.

The particulars will vary, but in essence this is what a number of students go through, especially those in so-called remedial classes. They open their textbooks and see once again the familiar and impenetrable formulas and diagrams and terms that have stumped them for years. There is no excitement here. No excitement. Regardless of what the teacher says, this is not a new challenge. There is, rather, embarrassment and frustration and, not surprisingly, some anger in being reminded once again of long-standing inadequacies. No wonder so many students finally attribute their difficulties to something inborn, organic: "That part of my brain just doesn't work." Given the troubling histories many of these students have, it's miraculous that any of them can lift the shroud of hopelessness sufficiently to make deliverance from these classes possible.

Summary Handout

So eventually he had to withdraw from his English 201 class.

Jason's attendance was atrocious, and he rarely did his homework. So eventually he had to withdraw from his English 201 class.

Topic Sentence Paragraph 1

Farther down the river, for example, in the Delta town of Tunica, Mississippi, people in the black community of Sugar Ditch live in shacks by open sewers that are commonly believed to be responsible for the high incidence of liver tumors and abscesses found in children there. Metaphors of caste like these are everywhere in the United States. Sadly, although dirt and water flow downhill, money and services do not.

The pattern of concentrating black communities in easily flooded lowland areas is not unusual in the United States. Farther down the river, for example, in the Delta town of Tunica, Mississippi, people in the black community of Sugar Ditch live in shacks by open sewers that are commonly believed to be responsible for the high incidence of liver tumors and abscesses found in children there. **Metaphors**[1] of **caste**[2] like these are everywhere in the United States. Sadly, although dirt and water flow downhill, money and services do not.
(a paragraph about conditions for school children in East St. Louis from *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathan Kozol)

[1] **metaphor**: one thing used or considered to represent another
[2] **caste**: any system that divides people into classes according to their rank, wealth, or profession, or that of the family into which they were born

Using your own words, write a short summary of this paragraph in the space below:

Ultimately, **social class**[3] determines how people think about social class. When asked if poverty in America is the fault of the poor or the fault of the system, 57 percent of business leaders blamed the poor; just 9 percent blamed the system. Labor leaders showed sharply reversed choices: only 15 percent said the poor were at fault while 56 percent blamed the system. (Some replied "don't know" or chose a middle position.) The largest single difference between our two main political parties lies in how their members think about social class: 55 percent of Republicans blamed the poor for their poverty, while only 13 percent blamed the system for it; 68 percent of Democrats, on the other hand, blamed the system, while only 5 percent blamed the poor.

[3] **social class**: the structure of divisions in a society determined by the social or economic grouping of its members; a category of people who have a similar level of opportunity to obtain economic resources and prestige

Using your own words, write a short summary of this paragraph in the space below:

Then too, of course, the flag in every classroom is the same. Children do not pledge allegiance to the flag of Nashua, New Hampshire, or to that of Fargo, North Dakota. The words of the pledge are very clear: They pledge allegiance to "one nation indivisible" and, in view of what we've seen of the **implacable**[4] divisions that exist and are so skillfully maintained, there is some **irony**[5] in this. The nation is hardly "indivisible" where education is concerned. It is at least two nations, quite methodically divided, with a fair amount of liberty for some, no liberty that justifies the word for many others, and justice—in the sense of playing on a nearly even field—only for the kids whose parents can afford to purchase it.

[4] **implacable**: impossible to reduce in strength or force (formal)

[5] **irony**: something that happens that does not fit with what might be expected to happen, especially when this seems absurd or laughable

Using your own words, write a short summary of this paragraph in the space below:

To the extent that school reforms such as "restructuring" are advocated for the inner cities, few of these reforms have reached the schools that I have seen. In each of the larger cities there is usually one school or one subdistrict which is highly publicized as an example of "restructured" education; but the changes rarely reach beyond this one example. Even in those schools where some "restructuring" has taken place, the fact of racial segregation has been, and continues to be, largely uncontested. In many cities, what is termed "restructuring" struck me as very little more than moving around the same old furniture within the house of poverty. The perceived objective was a more "efficient" ghetto school or one with greater "input" from the ghetto parents or more "choices" for the ghetto children. The fact of ghetto education as a permanent American reality appeared to be accepted.

(These three paragraphs are from *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathan Kozol)

Using your own words, write a short summary of this paragraph in the space below:

There was a high level of political sophistication among those in leadership positions in the black community [in 1964]; and, in the course of framing goals and analyzing structures, they recognized the multitude of different forces that diminished opportunity for children in the neighborhood. So the struggle they set out before us was not only about ending racial segregation in these schools; and yet that struggle was, for them, for all of us, the moral starting-point of all the rest. The goal was not to find a more efficient way of governing a segregated school. The goal was not to find a more ingenious way of teaching vowel sounds and consonant blends to segregated children. The goal was not to find a more inventive way of introducing pieces of "essential knowledge"—dates of wars, or names of kings, or multiples of nine—into the minds of segregated children. The goal was not to figure out a way to run a more severe and strictly regimented school for segregated children or, at the opposite extreme, a more progressive and more "innovative" school for segregated children. Nor, as welcome as this might have been, was it to build a smaller school or physically more pleasing school for segregated children. The goal was to unlock the chains that held these children within caste-and-color **sequestration**[6] and divorced them from the mainstream of American society. (from *The Shame of the Nation*, Jonathan Kozol)

[6] sequestration: the act or process of legally confiscating somebody's property temporarily until a debt that person owes is paid, a dispute is settled, or a court order obeyed

Summary #1

Stark as the **inequities** in District 10 appear, educators say that they are "mild" in comparison to other situations in the city. Some of the most stunning inequality, according to a report by the Community Service Society, **derives** from **allocations** granted by state legislators to school districts where they have political allies. The poorest districts in the city get approximately 90 cents per pupil from these legislative grants, while the richest districts have been given $14 for each pupil. 1

Newspapers in New York City have reported other instances of the misallocation of resources. "The Board of Education," wrote the New York Post during July of 1987, "was hit with bombshell charges yesterday that money earmarked for fighting drug abuse and illiteracy in ghetto schools was funneled instead to schools in wealthy areas." 2

In receipt of extra legislative funds, according to the Post, **affluent** districts were funded "at a rate 14 times greater than low-income districts." The paper said the city's poorest areas were underfunded "with stunning consistency." 3

The report by the Community Service Society cites an official of the New York City Board of Education who remarks that there is "no point" in putting further money "into some poor districts" because, in his belief, "new teachers would not stay there." But the report observes that, in an instance where beginning teacher salaries were raised by nearly half, "that problem largely disappeared"—another interesting reminder of the difference money makes when we are willing to invest it. Nonetheless, says the report, "the perception that the poorest districts are beyond help still remains . . . ." Perhaps the worst result of such beliefs, says the report, is the message that resources would be "wasted on poor children." This message "trickles down to districts, schools, and classrooms." Children hear and understand this theme—they are poor investments—and behave accordingly. If society's resources would be wasted on their destinies, perhaps their own determination would be wasted too. "Expectations are a powerful force. . . ," the CSS observes. 4

Despite the evidence, the CSS report leans over backwards not to fuel the flames of racial indignation. "In the present climate," the report says, "suggestions of racism must be made with caution. However, it is inescapable that these inequities are being perpetrated on [school} districts which are virtually all black and Hispanic ... ." While the report says, very carefully, that there is no "evidence" of "deliberate individual discrimination," it nonetheless concludes that "those who allocate resources make decisions over and over again which penalize the poorest districts." Analysis of city policy, the study says, "speaks to systemic **bias** which constitutes a conspiracy of effect .... Whether consciously or not, the system writes off its poorest students." (From *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathan Kozol)

inequity: something that is not equal to something else
derive: to obtain something or come from a source
allocation: the assignment or earmarking of something
affluent: wealthy, rich
bias: an unfair preference for or dislike of something

Summary Notes

Summary #2

Social class is probably the single most important variable in society. From womb to tomb, it correlates with almost all other social characteristics of people that we can measure. Affluent expectant mothers are more likely to get prenatal care, receive current medical advice, and enjoy general health, fitness, and nutrition. Many poor and working-class mothers-to-be first contact the medical profession in the last month, sometimes the last hours, of their pregnancies. Rich babies come out healthier and weighing more than poor babies. The infants go home to very different situations. Poor babies are more likely to have high levels of poisonous lead in their environments and their bodies. Rich babies get more time and verbal interaction with their parents and higher quality day care when not with their parents. When they enter kindergarten, and through the twelve years that follow, rich children benefit from suburban schools that spend two to three times as much money per student as schools in inner cities or impoverished rural areas. Poor children are taught in classes that are often 50 percent larger than the classes of affluent children. Differences such as these help account for the higher school-dropout rate among poor children. 1

Even when poor children are fortunate enough to attend the same school as rich children, they encounter teachers who expect only children of affluent families to know the right answers. Social science research shows that teachers are often surprised and even distressed when poor children excel. Teachers and counselors believe they can predict who is "college material." Since many working-class children give off the wrong signals, even in first grade, they end up in the "general education" track in high school. If you are the child of low-income parents, the chances are good that you will receive limited and often careless attention from adults in your high school," in the words of Theodore Sizer's best-selling study of American high schools, *Horace's Compromise*. "If you are the child of upper-middle-income parents, the chances are good that you will receive substantial and careful attention." Researcher Reba Page has provided vivid accounts of how high school American history courses use rote learning to turn off lower-class students. Thus schools have put into practice Woodrow Wilson's recommendation: "We want one class of persons to have a liberal education, and we want another class of persons, a very much larger class of necessity in every society, to forgo the privilege of a liberal education and fit themselves to perform specific difficult manual tasks." 2

As if this unequal home and school life were not enough, rich teenagers then enroll in the Princeton Review or other coaching sessions for the Scholastic Aptitude Test. Even without coaching, affluent children are advantaged because their background is similar to that of the test-makers, so they are comfortable with the vocabulary and subtle subcultural assumptions of the test. To no one's surprise, social class correlates strongly with SAT scores. 3

All these are among the reasons why social class predicts the rate of college attendance and the type of college chosen more effectively than does any other factor, including intellectual ability, however measured. After college, most affluent children get white-collar jobs, most working-class children get blue-collar jobs, and the class differences continue. As adults, rich people are more likely to have hired an attorney and to be a member of formal organizations that increase their civic power. Poor people are more likely to watch TV. Because affluent families can save some money while poor families must spend what they make, wealth differences are ten 4

times larger than income differences. Therefore most poor and working-class families cannot accumulate the down payment required to buy a house, which in turn shuts them out from our most important tax shelter, the writeoff of home mortgage interest. Working-class parents cannot afford to live in elite subdivisions or hire high-quality day care, so the process of educational inequality replicates itself in the next 4
generation. Finally, affluent Americans also have longer life expectancies than lower- and working-class people, the largest single cause of which is better access to health care. Echoing the results of Helen Keller's study of blindness, research has determined that poor health is not distributed randomly about the social structure but is concentrated in the lower class. Social Security then becomes a huge transfer system, using monies contributed by all Americans to pay benefits disproportionately to longer-lived affluent Americans.
(From "The Land of Opportunity," *Lies My Teacher Told Me*, James W. Loewen)

Social class refers to the hierarchical distinctions between individuals or groups in societies or cultures.

Summary Notes

Summary #3

The basic formula in place today for education finance is described as a "foundation program." First introduced during the early 1920s, the formula attempts to reconcile the right of local districts to support and govern their own schools with the obligation of the state to lessen the extremes of educational provision between districts. The former concern derives from the respect for liberty—which is defined, in this case, as the freedom of the district to provide for its own youth—and from the belief that more efficiency is possible when the control of local schools is held by those who have the greatest stake in their success. The latter concern derives from the respect for equal opportunity for all schoolchildren, regardless of their parents' poverty or wealth. 1

The foundation program, in its pure form, operates somewhat like this: (1) A local tax upon the value of the homes and businesses within a given district raises the initial funds required for the operations of the public schools. (2) In the wealthiest districts, this is frequently enough to operate an adequate school system. Less affluent districts levy a tax at the same rate as the richest district—which assures that the tax burden on all citizens is equally apportioned—but, because the property is worth less in a poor community, the revenues derived will be inadequate to operate a system on the level of the richest district. (3) The state will then provide sufficient funds to lift the poorer districts to a level ("the foundation") roughly equal to that of the richest district. 2

If this formula were strictly followed, something close to revenue equality would be achieved. It would still not satisfy the greater needs of certain districts, which for instance may have greater numbers of retarded, handicapped, or Spanish-speaking children. It would succeed in treating districts, but not children, equally. But even this degree of equal funding has not often been achieved. 3

The sticking point has been the third and final point listed above: what is described as the "foundation." Instead of setting the foundation at the level of the richest district, the states more frequently adopt what has been called "a low foundation." The low foundation is a level of subsistence that will raise a district to a point at which its schools are able to provide a "minimum" or "basic" education, but not an education on the level found in the rich districts. The notion of a "minimum" (rather than a "full") foundation represents a very special definition of the idea of equality. It guarantees that every child has "an equal minimum" but not that every child has the same. Stated in a slightly different way, it guarantees that every child has a building called "a school" but not that what is found within one school will bear much similarity, if any, to that which is found within another. 4

The decision as to what may represent a reasonable "minimum" (the term "sufficient" often is employed) is, of course, determined by the state officials. Because of the dynamics of state politics, this determination is in large part shaped by what the richer districts judge to be "sufficient" for the poorer; and this, in turn, leads to the all-important question: "sufficient" for what purpose? If the necessary outcome of the education of a child of low income is believed to be the capability to enter into equal competition with the children of the rich, then the foundation level has to be extremely high. If the necessary outcome is, however, only the capacity to hold some sort of job—perhaps a job as an employee of the person who was born in a rich 5

district—then the foundation could be very "minimal" indeed. The latter, in effect, has been the resolution of this question.

This is not the only factor that has fostered inequality, however. In order to win backing from the wealthy districts for an equalizing plan of any kind, no matter how inadequate, legislatures offer the rich districts an incentive. The incentive is to grant some portion of state aid to *all* school districts, regardless of their poverty or wealth. While less state aid is naturally expected to be given to the wealthy than the poor, the notion of giving something to all districts is believed to be a "sweetener" that will assure a broad enough electoral appeal to raise the necessary funds through statewide taxes. As we have seen in several states, however, these "sweeteners" have been so sweet that they have sometimes ended up by deepening the preexisting inequalities. 6

All this leads us to the point, acknowledged often by school-finance specialists but largely unknown to the public, that the various "formulas" conceived—and reconceived each time there is a legal challenge—to achieve some equity in public education have been almost total failures. In speaking of the equalizing formula in Massachusetts, for example, the historian Joel Weinberg makes this candid observation: "The state could actually have done as well if it had made no attempt to relate its support system to local ability [i.e., local wealth] and distributed its 'largesse' in a completely random fashion"—as, for example, "by the State Treasurer throwing checks from an airplane and allowing the vagaries of the elements to distribute them among the different communities." But even this description of a "random" distribution may be generous. If the wind had been distributing state money in New jersey, for example, it might have left most disparities unchanged, but it would not likely have increased **disparities** consistently for 20 years, which is what the state formula has done without exception. 7

(From "The Dream Deferred, Again, in San Antonio" *Savage Inequalities*, Jonathan Kozol,)

disparity: lack of equality between things or people

Summary Notes

Summary #4

Class and Educational Attainment

(From “Class in America: Myths and Realities,” Gregory Mantsios)

School performance (grades and test scores) and educational attainment (level of schooling completed) also correlate strongly with economic class. Furthermore, despite some efforts to make testing fairer and schooling more accessible, current data suggest that the level of inequity is staying the same or getting worse. 1

In his study for the Carnegie Council on Children fifteen years ago, Richard De Lone examined the test scores of over half a million students who took the College Board exams (SATs). His findings were consistent with earlier studies that showed a relationship between class and scores on standardized tests; his conclusion: "the higher the student's social status, the higher the probability that he or she will get higher grades." Fifteen years after the release of the Carnegie report, College Board surveys reveal data that are no different: test scores still correlate strongly with family income. 2

Table 1 Average Combined Scores by Income (400 to 1600 scale)

FAMILY INCOME	MEDIAN SCORE
More than $100,000	1130
$80,000 to $100,000	1082
$70,000 to $80,000	1058
$60,000 to $70,000	1043
$50,000 to $60,000	1030
$40,000 to $50,000	1011
$30,000 to $40,000	986
$20,000 to $30,000	954
$10,000 to $20,000	907
less than $10,000	871

These figures are based on the test results of 1,302,903 SAT takers in 1999.

A little more than twenty years ago, researcher William Sewell showed a positive correlation between class and overall educational achievement. In comparing the top quartile (25%) of his sample to the bottom quartile, he found that students from upper-class families were twice as likely to obtain training beyond high school and four times as likely to attain a postgraduate degree. Sewell concluded: "Socioeconomic background . . . operates independently of academic ability at every stage in the process of educational attainment." 3

Today, the pattern persists. There are, however, two significant changes. On the one hand, the odds of getting into college have improved for the bottom quartile of the population, although they still remain relatively low compared to the top. On the other hand, the chances of completing a college degree have deteriorated markedly for the bottom quartile. Researchers estimate the chances of completing a four-year 4

college degree (by age 24) to be nineteen times as great for the top 25 percent of the population as it is for the bottom 25 percent. "Those from the bottom quartile of family income . . . are faring worse than they have at any time in the 23 years of published Current Population Survey data. "

Class standing has a significant impact on chances for educational attainment. Class standing, and consequently life chances, are largely determined at birth. Although examples of individuals who have gone from rags to riches abound in the mass media, statistics on class mobility show these leaps to be extremely rare. In fact, dramatic advances in class standing are relatively few. One study showed that fewer than one in five men surpass the economic status of their fathers. For those whose annual income is in six figures, economic success is due in large part to the wealth and privileges bestowed on them at birth. Over 66 percent of the consumer units with incomes of $100,000 or more have some inherited assets. Of these units, over 86 percent reported that inheritances constituted a substantial portion of their total assets. 5

Economist Harold Wachtel likens inheritance to a series of Monopoly games in which the winner of the first game refuses to relinquish his or her cash and commercial property for the second game. "After all," argues the winner, "I accumulated my wealth and income by my own wits." With such an arrangement, it is not difficult to predict the outcome of subsequent games. 6

All Americans do not have an equal opportunity to succeed. Inheritance laws ensure a greater likelihood of success for the offspring of the wealthy. 7

Summary Notes

WRITING SUMMARIES[1]

A summary is a concise restatement in one's own words of another, longer document, usually an article or a report. Summaries are often used in business and academic settings in which a committee or small group of teachers or students need to grasp a great deal of material very quickly. In such cases, the group will summarize for the group as a whole, so every person won't have to read every single document. Needless to say, in such cases the summaries must be accurate as well as brief.

Summaries are also handy study tools for students, particularly those facing essay tests. Summarizing the chapters in a textbook or articles assigned to be read can help in reviewing the material and is a great help in remembering the material. Moreover, once you have written down the information, writing it again under the pressure of time, as during an essay text becomes much easier.

The summaries we will write for this class should be as carefully composed as an essay and have all of an essay's usual characteristics, including paragraphs with topic sentences. A working summary that you write for yourself need not be so formal; it may even be all one paragraph if that suits your purpose.

A good working summary is written **in your own words**, though you may want to borrow brief key phrases from the original. It ***must*** have the following characteristics:

- Above all, it must maintain and communicate the meaning of the original.
- It must not contain your opinions or views on the original.
- It must stick strictly to what the original writer had to say.
- It must contain all the main points of the original.
- Usually it will not contain the supporting points, unless one or more of them is of unusual importance.

You can see that to write a good summary you need to exercise a great deal of judgment about what is important to include and what represents too much detail.

A good working summary should answer these questions:

1. What is the subject of the original? What problem or situation is the writer addressing? (You might want to set this off as a separate paragraph, like an introduction, to make it stand out.)
2. What are the main points of the original? The summary may or may not stick to the same order as the original. Normally summaries will cover the most important points first, although articles and reports often do not do that. If the original involves discussion of some pro/con issue or compares two things, the summary will usually give all the pro points together and all the con points

[1] Taken from *Texts and Contexts* by William Robinson

together or keep the various points of the comparison together even though the original might not be organized that way.

3. What conclusions does the original reach?

STEPS IN WRITING A SUMMARY

How do you go about writing a good working summary? If you follow the steps below, you will have an excellent chance of producing a useful and accurate summary.

1. Read through the entire original to get an understanding of the whole piece. On a piece of scratch paper, write in your own words the ***point*** of the piece, which you will usually find in the introduction and its conclusion.

2. Reread and underline or highlight the important ideas. Carefully check the beginnings of paragraphs for topic sentences that announce new points. Normally, you will not want to highlight supporting facts, but some may be so striking or otherwise important that you will want to include them in your summary.

3. Now write the introductory statement of your summary, explaining what the original is about. Try to confine yourself to one sentence—two at the most.

4. Decide on the order in which you want to present the main points of the original; you will probably need to do some scribbling on scratch paper to do this. Review the materials you have highlighted to make sure you cover everything.

5. Write the body of your summary, using your own words and making sure to cover all the key points.

6. Write your last part, on which you explain what the original author's conclusions were. Be sure to keep your own opinions out of this part.

7. Proofread for spelling, typographical errors, and the conventions of usage. In particular, compare the spelling of titles, authors, and other names and key terms with those in the original document.

From “The Educated Student: Global Citizen or Global Consumer?” Benjamin Barber

In 1776 it was all pretty simple for people who cared about both education and democracy. There was nobody among the extraordinary group of men who founded this nation who did not know that democracy—then an inventive, challenging, experimental new system of government—was dependent for its success not just on constitutions, laws, and institutions, but dependent for its success on the quality of citizens who would constitute the new republic. Because democracy depends on citizenship, the emphasis then was to think about what and how to constitute a competent and virtuous citizen body. That led directly, in almost every one of the founders' minds, to the connection between citizenship and education.

Whether you look at Thomas Jefferson in Virginia or John Adams in Massachusetts, there was widespread agreement that the new republic, for all of the cunning of its inventive and experimental new Constitution, could not succeed unless the citizenry was well educated. That meant that in the period after the Revolution but before the ratification of the Constitution, John Adams argued hard for schools for every young man in Massachusetts (it being the case, of course, that only men could be citizens). And in Virginia, Thomas Jefferson made the same argument for public schooling for every potential citizen in America, founding the first great public university there. Those were arguments that were uncontested.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century this logic was clear in the common school movement and later, in the land grant colleges. It was clear in the founding documents of every religious, private, and public higher education institution in this country. Colleges and universities had to be committed above all to the constituting of citizens. That's what education was about. The other aspects of it—literacy, knowledge, and research—were in themselves important. Equally important as dimensions of education and citizenship was education that would make the Bill of Rights real, education that would make democracy succeed.

It was no accident that in subsequent years, African Americans and then women struggled for a place and a voice in this system, and the key was always seen as education. If women were to be citizens, then women's education would have to become central to suffragism.[2] After the Civil War, African Americans were given technical liberty but remained in many ways in economic servitude. Education again was seen as the key. The struggle over education went on, through Plessy vs. Ferguson[3] in 1896—separate, but equal—right down to the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education,[4] which declared separate but equal unconstitutional.

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[2] *suffragism*: The movement to gain women the right to vote.

[3] *Plessy vs. Ferguson*: 1896 Supreme Court case that established the “separate but equal” doctrine of legal discrimination practiced in the South in the form of “Jim Crow” laws until the 1950s.

[4] *Brown vs. Board of Education:* The 1954 Supreme Court case that reversed *Plessy v. Ferguson*.

NAME_____

WRITING SUMMARIES QUIZ

1. Is a summary written in your own words?

2. Does it contain your own ideas?

3. Does it contain the main points of the original ***or*** the supporting points ***or*** both? **Explain**.

4. Is it **necessarily** organized in the same way as the original?

5. When you highlight something you are going to summarize or that you are reading for a later examination, what do you highlight? **Explain**.

Answer the following questions from the reading, "The Educated Student…"

6. The founding fathers of our country felt that a workable democracy depended upon the connection between two things. What were those two things?

7. Since a good education was seen as a key to good citizenship, how did both John Adams and Thomas Jefferson seek to bring that about?

8. In those days, what was seen as the most important function of education?

9. Later two groups saw education as important to moving towards equality in this country. What two groups?

10. What two court cases were key to the development of this increased opportunity through education?

Student's Full Name

Instructor's Name

Class Name

Date

MLA Format: Titles Go Here and Reflect Your Thesis

The layout of this page is an example of how to format an essay in MLA (Modern Languages Association) style. The margins are 1 inch both sides, top and bottom, the font size 12pt, and the header has your last name only and page number 1/2 inch from the top of the page and it's printed on all the pages of your essay. To do a header go to View and Header/Footer to insert the page number and type your last name. When you create your first document Save As "MLA Template" and for your next assignment open that document and use the Save As selection (under the File menu) to create a new document with a new name.

In your summaries paragraph structure is not important, but for all of your essays this semester all your paragraphs should be well developed with the P.I.E. paragraph structure (see my web site), using topic sentences supporting the thesis, ample support for the topic sentences, and explanation portions clearly explaining the connection between the support and the topic sentence and the thesis. The first thing I look for in essays is paragraph development so be sure to develop all your paragraphs to at least two thirds of a page long, including the introduction and the conclusion. Your essay should look just like this page with double spacing throughout and no extra space between the paragraphs or above and below the title. The first line of each paragraph (including the first paragraph in the essay) should be indented using the tab key. Be sure to use the checklists very carefully to go over your assignments since I turn the checklists into grading sheets, making each element of the checklist important to get a good grade.

Using Quotations

Quoting the words of an author is one of the academically acceptable methods for providing support for a point or backing up your argument. Quotations need to be grammatically incorporated into the natural flow of your writing. Here is a part of a paragraph written by a student. Notice how she has incorporated quotations into her paragraph.

> Working long hours under stressful conditions, especially in fast-food restaurants, appears to promote some forms of delinquent behavior. Lou DeRosa, a 29 year old manager of a McDonald's, said, "This is a survival job. A lot of people can't handle it." In addition to low wages and a hot, high-speed work environment, some employees complain of poor treatment by managers. Through Mark Kershaw's own experience as a manager he agrees that "there are some managers who treat them like slaves."

Punctuating Titles of Works

The general rule is that we underline or italicize the titles of long works and put quotation marks around the titles of short works. So the names of books, movies, magazines, newspapers, and record albums get underlined or italicized:

> The Great Gatsby
> *Citizen Kane*
> Cosmopolitan
> *The Atlantic Constitution*

But we put quotation marks around the titles of essays or articles, short stories, songs and so on. The first word in titles is always capitalized and every *major* word after that.

Introducing Quotations

Suppose you are going to quote from one of our assignments, "Fatigue" by Jane Brody. In the first reference to this article, you would give the name of the author and the complete title of the article. Here are three ways of doing this:

> In her article, "Fatigue" Jane Brody claims that many people complain of fatigue these days.
>
> In "Fatigue" Jane Brody writes, "Fatigue is one of the most common complaints brought to doctors . . . ."
>
> According to Jane Brody in "Fatigue," the tiredness that people complain about generally does not have to do with exercising too much.

Note that these three sentences are based on two simple patterns. The first two follow this pattern:

In + [title], + [author] *writes*, + quotation (or paraphrased claim)

The third sentence uses a different pattern:

According to + [author] in [title], + quotation (or paraphrased claim)

Then in later references, you would simply use the last names of the author with no further mention of the title of the article:

> Brody writes, "Here fatigue is a warning sign . . . ."
>
> According to Brody, "tired housewife syndrome" is a major part of psychological fatigue.

Warning: A Problem

Sometimes students start a sentence with a prepositional phrase, particularly some beginning with ***in***, and then get stuck continuing. Introductory prepositional phrases are handy for referring the reader to a document previously mentioned, as in these cases:

> In this article
> In this book
> In Brody's essay

In such cases, remember that the word after the ***in*** (article, book, essay) cannot be the subject of the sentence. For example, the following sentence is incorrect:

> In this article stated that Ethiopia is once again facing a famine.

Students sometimes try to solve this problem by putting the word ***it*** in as the subject, but this is incorrect as well. **Avoid using the word *it* as the subject when it refers to a noun immediately preceding it.** AGAIN the following sentence is INCORRECT:

> In this article, it stated that Ethiopia is once again facing a famine

How do you handle such a situation? It helps to remember that articles and books don't talk or "state"; authors do. If you know the name of the author, use that as the subject of the sentence:

> In this article, Fernandez states that Ethiopia is once again facing famine.

If you don't have access to the author's name just substitute "the author states."

Introducing Quotations Exercise

Following are exercises in using quotations. Here are the quotations you will use:

A. Although the breakup of the Soviet Union marked the end of the Cold War, in Eastern Europe Communism has been replaced by new ethnic strife.
Mario Cuellar, *The More Things Change*

B. It is difficult to defend free speech when groups exploit it, as is done in some popular music, to foment racial and sexual prejudices.
Sarah Murray, "The Aesthetics of Injustice," in *Current Social Issues*

1. Referring back to the sections "Punctuating Quotations," "Punctuating Titles of Works," and "Introducing Quotations," write four sentences using quotation A. Each time, you should introduce the quotation in a different way. In your first two sentences, use an "In . . ." pattern and an "According to . . ." pattern, quoting this author for the first time. In the next two sentences, assume that you have already quoted him before.

2. Referring back to the sections "Punctuating Quotations," "Punctuating Titles of Works," and "Introducing Quotations," write four sentences using quotation B. Each time, you should introduce the quotation in a different way. In your first two sentences, use an "In . . ." pattern and an "According to . . ." pattern, quoting this author for the first time. In the next two sentences, assume that you have already quoted her before.

Attention:

This exercise requires that you place the above quotes very carefully into the patterns on the Using Quotations handout paying close attention to all the details you find there.

NAME _____

Introducing Quotations Exam

Introduce the first article on men's and women's talk using one of the "in" patterns and do a later reference on that article too. **Pay close attention to all the details** and you can use your books and Schedule of Activities.

1. "In" pattern introduction

2. Later reference of first article

Introduce the second article on men's and women's talk using the "According to" pattern and do a later reference on that article too. **Pay close attention to all the details** and you can use your books and Schedule of Activities.

1. "According to . . ." pattern

2. Later reference of second article

Men's and Women's Talk Report

Write a "report" about the way that men and women communicate with each other. Although the five paragraph essay is **not a part of this course**, for this transition assignment to the formal essay I want you to write a "report" that consists of **four paragraphs**:

1. **An introduction** in which you introduce the general topic of the ways that men and women converse with each other and the problems that they sometimes encounter. The introduction should be **your own**, in your **own words**, indicating **your own** observations on the theme. Near the end of your introduction you should introduce the two essays and the two authors that you will be summarizing in the next two paragraphs using **two complete patterns** from the Using Quotations handout. Your introduction should be almost **one full page**.
2. **A summary** of "His Talk, Her Talk" by Joyce Maynard
3. **A summary** of "Man to Man, Woman to Woman" by Mark A. Sherman and Adelaide Haas
4. **A conclusion** that recommends one or the other of the essays for married couples as required reading. Your recommendation section should compare the strengths and weaknesses of the two essays to show *why* you recommend one over the other. Your conclusion must be **at least two thirds of a page** long to develop this theme properly.

The report should be typed, and double spaced, using your MLA template from previous assignments. Now is the time to use what we have learned about how to introduce authors and texts. Make sure to use one of the patterns in the book (p. 36) each time you introduce an author and essay. And don't forget about the "later reference" rules.

Grading Checklist

- Does the report follow the directions of the assignment, typed in MLA format? (deduction for MLA errors)
- Do the two summary paragraphs include the thesis first and all the points that we came up with in peer group work?
- Has the report been proofread to the best of your ability, and did you run spellcheck?
- Are the two essays and authors introduced correctly with a pattern from the textbook? (deduction for author introduction errors)
- Does the report have a thoughtful and well developed introduction and conclusion?

Writing a Report

Following are two short essays on the same subject, a problem in male-female relationships that often has serious effects: how men and women verbally communicate with each other.

Imagine that you are serving as a consultant to a marriage guidance class. The instructor of the class gives you the following task:

Writing Assignment

Write a report indicating which of the two following essays you think newly married couples attending the marriage guidance class should read. Your report should consist of three parts: a short introduction about the general problem of male-female communication, summaries of each of the two essays, and a concluding recommendation about which one you think should be required reading. The recommendation section should compare the strengths and weaknesses of the two essays to show *why* you recommend one over the other.

Before you read the two essays, spend a few moments on *pre-reading*—that is, thinking in a fairly organized way about the subject you are going to tackle.

Pre-reading

Ask yourself the following questions (or ones like them):

- Have you ever noticed—on a date for example—that you and the opposite sex don't always want to talk about exactly the same things—that sometimes you have to listen to your partner talk about something that doesn't really interest you at all?

- Who spends more time on the phone—your women friends (or sister) or your men friends (or brother)?
- What do women use the phone for, primarily? How about men?
- If you have a sibling of the opposite sex, have you noticed that he or she talks with friends about different things than you like to talk about with your friends?
- On social occasions, have you noticed that married couples often split up, with the women getting in one group and the men in another?
- Do your mother and father tend to want to talk about different topics? Do they have different conversational styles? Does one tend to talk more than the other?

After you've given this subject some thought from your own experience, you're ready to read what others think about it. Keep an open mind as you read; you may learn something new.

Reading

Read the following essays, underlining or highlighting and making notes on their main points and anything else you think is particularly important. (If a piece of information is something that *you* didn't know before and are glad you learned, that's a sign that it's important.) As you did in writing your previous summaries, first skim these two essays, looking for their introductions and indications of what their main sections are, what main points they cover. Notice, however, that the first essay, by Joyce Maynard, is organized in a completely different way from the essays you've previously worked on and from the second essay, by Sherman and Haas. Maynard's is a very informal essay written for a newspaper column and so she doesn't use a conventional introduction but instead drifts into her main subject. Sherman and Haas write the kind of standard introduction your teachers in college will expect you to write.

HIS TALK, HER TALK

Joyce Maynard

It can be risky these days to suggest that there are any **innate** differences between men and women, other than those of anatomy. Out the window go the old notions about man and aggression, woman and submission (don't even say the word), man and intellect, woman and instinct. If I observe that my infant son prefers pushing a block along the floor while making car noises to cradling a doll in his arms and singing lullabies (and he does)—well, I can only conclude that, despite all our earnest attempts 1

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innate: *possessed at birth*

at nonsexist childrearing, he has already suffered environmental contamination. Some of it, no doubt unwittingly, came from my husband and me, **reared** in the days when nobody **winced** if you recited that old **saw** about what little girls and little boys are made of.

I do not believe, of course, that men are smarter, steadier, more high- 2
minded than women. But one or two notions are harder to shake—such as the idea that there is such a thing as "men's talk" or "women's talk." And that it's a natural instinct to seek out, on occasion, the company of one's own sex, exclude members of the other sex and not feel guilty about it.

Oh, but we do. At a party I attended the other night, for instance, it sud- 3
denly became apparent that all the women were in one room and all the men were in the other. Immediately we redistributed ourselves, which was a shame. No one had suggested we segregate. The talk in the kitchen was simply, all the women felt, more interesting.

I think I know my husband very well, but I have no idea what goes on 4
when he and his male friends get together. Neither can he picture what can keep a woman friend and me occupied for three hours over a single pot of coffee.

The other day, after a long day of work, my husband Steve and his 5
friend Dave stopped at a bar for a few beers. When he got home, I asked what they had talked about. "Oh, the usual." Like what? "Firewood. Central America. Trucks. The Celtics. Religion. You know."

No, not really. I had only recently met with my friend Ann and her 6
friend Sally at a coffee shop nearby, and what we talked about was the workshop Sally would be holding that weekend concerning women's attitudes toward their bodies, Ann's 11-year-old daughter's upcoming slumber party, how hard it is to buy jeans, and the recent dissolution of a friend's five-year marriage. Asked to **capsulize** our afternoon's discussion, in a form similar to my husband's outline of his night out, I would say we talked about life, love, happiness and heartbreak. Larry Bird's name never came up.

I don't want to reinforce old stereotypes of bubble-headed women 7
(Lucy and Ethel), clinking their coffee cups over talk of clothes and diets while the men remove themselves to lean on mantels, puff on cigars and **muse** about world politics, machines and philosophy. A group of women talking, it seems to me, is likely to concern itself with matters just as pressing as those broached by my husband and friends. It might be said, in fact, that we're really talking about the same eternal conflicts. Our styles are just different.

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reared: *brought up, raised;* ***winced:*** *flinched;* ***saw:*** *saying;*
capsulize: *summarize;* ***muse:*** *think about*

When Steve tells a story, the point is, as a rule, the ending, and getting there by the most direct route. It may be a good story, told with beautiful precision, but he tells it the way he eats a banana: in three efficient chews, while I cut mine up and savor it. He can (although this is rare) spend 20 minutes on the telephone with one of his brothers, tantalizing me with occasional exclamations of amazement or shock, and then after hanging up, reduce the whole conversation for me to a one-sentence summary. I, on the other hand, may take three quarters of an hour describing some figure from my past while he waits—with thinly veiled impatience—for the point to emerge. Did this fellow just get elected to the House of Representatives? Did he die and leave me his fortune? 8

In fairness to Steve, I must say that, for him, not talking about something doesn't necessarily mean not dealing with it. And he does listen to what I have to say. He likes a good story, too. It's just that, given a choice, he'd rather hear about quantum mechanics or the history of the Ford Mustang. Better yet, he'd rather play ball. 9

MAN TO MAN, WOMAN TO WOMAN

Mark A. Sherman and Adelaide Haas

When it comes to conversation, husbands and wives often have problems that close friends of the same sex don't have. First, they may not have much to talk about, and second, when they do talk, misunderstandings often develop that lead to major fights. Our research concludes that these problems are particularly resistant to solution. Not only do men and women like to talk about different topics, spoken language serves different functions for the sexes. 1

Our findings are based on responses to a nationally distributed questionnaire, in-depth interviews and observation of same-sex conversations. We found much variation within each gender and no verbal absolutes to differentiate the sexes. But whether we look at topics of conversation or at the role language plays for each gender, we see enough difference to explain why men and women are, to use Lillian Rubin's book title, "intimate strangers." 2

One hundred sixty-six women and 110 men, ranging in age from 17 to 80, returned a questionnaire asking how often they discussed each of 22 topics with friends of the same sex. For some topics there is little difference—work, movies and television are, in that order, frequent topics of conversation for both sexes. On the other hand female friends report more talk than do men about relationship problems, family, health and reproductive concerns, weight, food and clothing. Men's talk is more likely than women's to be about music, current events and sports. 3

Women's topics tend to be closer to the self and more emotional than men's (in another questionnaire item, 60 percent of the women but only 27 percent of the men said that their same-sex conversations were often on emotional topics). A common topic, and one generally reserved for one's own sex, is the other sex and sexuality. Interestingly, women talk about other women much more than men talk about other men (excluding sports heroes and public figures). This includes "cattiness," a feature of conversation that many women wished to see eliminated. "Keep the gossip but get rid of the cattiness" is how one put it.

Of course, there are men who are eager to talk about family matters 4
and women who love to talk about sports, but for a typical couple, there will be areas of personal importance that the other partner is simply not interested in and, in fact, may **deride**. "Trivial" is a term used often by both sexes to describe topics of obvious significance to the other.

But the difference in topics is not so damaging to intimate male-female 5
relationships as are the differences in the style and function of conversation. For men, talks with friends are enjoyed primarily for their freedom, playfulness and **camaraderie.** When we asked men what they liked best about their all-male talk, the most frequent answer had to do with its ease. "You don't have to watch what you say" is how one young man put it. Some men commented on enjoying the fast pace of all-male conversation, and several specifically mentioned humor. A number of men said that they liked the practical aspects of these talks. As one wrote, "We teach each other practical ways to solve everyday problems: New cars, tax handling, etc."

A different picture emerged when we asked women what they liked best 6
about talking with other women. While many mentioned ease and camaraderie, the feature mentioned most often was empathy or understanding, which involves careful listening as well as talking. "To know that you're not alone." "The feeling of sharing and being understood without a sexual connotation." "Sensitivity to emotions that men feel are unimportant." In questionnaire responses and interviews, women spoke of their same-sex conversations not as something they merely liked, but truly needed.

Women's greater need for same-sex conversation was shown by re- 7
sponses to other questions. When we asked how important such conversations were, 63 percent of the women, but only 43 percent of the men, called them important or necessary. Women are also far likelier than men to call up a friend just to talk. Nearly half the women in our sample said they made such calls at least once a week, whereas less than one man in five said he did. In fact, 40 percent of the men said they never called

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deride: *make fun of;* ***camaraderie:*** *friendship*

another man just to talk (versus 14 percent of the women). Men use the phone a great deal for business, and in the context of a business call they may have friendly conversation. But a call just to "check in" is a rare event.

Consider then the marriage of a man who has had most of his conversations with other men, to a woman who has had most of hers with other women, probably the typical situation. He is used to fast-paced conversations that typically stay on the surface with respect to emotions, that often enable him to get practical tips or offer them to others and that are usually **pragmatic** or fun. She is used to conversations that, while practical and fun too, are also a major source of emotional support, self-understanding and the understanding of others. Becoming intimate with a man, the woman may finally start expressing her concerns to him as she might a close friend. But she may find, to her dismay, that his responses are all wrong. Instead of making her feel better, he makes her feel worse. The problem is that he tends to be direct and practical, whereas what she wants more than anything else is an **empathetic** listener. Used to years of such responses from close friends, a woman is likely to be surprised and angered by her husband's immediate "Here's what ya do . . ." Adding to her anger may be her belief, as expressed by many women in our survey, that men don't credit her with good sense and intelligence, and that perhaps that is why he is advising her. The fact is, he does the same with male friends. 8

Men can be good listeners, of course, and women can give direct advice. But just as women read books and take courses on how to be assertive, men take courses on how to become better listeners. Indeed, whether it was Shakespeare—"Give every man thine ear but few thy voice"—or Dale Carnegie—"Be a good listener"—men have impressed on each other the value of good listening. The advice, however, must often fall on deaf ears. Women continue to be seen as better listeners. 9

Many books and articles have been written on how language discriminates against women, and there is no doubt that it does. Attempts have been made to change this—in the last couple of years, for example, we have heard men say "he or she" instead of the generic "he" in all-male conversation—but as long as boys play with boys, and girls with girls the sexes will use language in different ways and for different purposes. Whether it is for the feeling of freedom that comes from not having to watch what you say, or the feeling of relief and joy that comes from another human being truly understanding you, we will continue to seek out those of our own sex to talk to. There is no reason each must adopt the other's style. What is necessary is to recognize and respect it. 10

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pragmatic: *practical, useful;* ***empathetic:*** *understanding*

Post-reading

Your assignment here is to prepare the following in order to write a first, or *idea,* draft of the report.

- Notes on the two articles, legibly written, with comments of your own about the importance of the points noted
- A rough outline of the report with the main points written under each section

Remember that you are both summarizing the articles and writing a recommendation and that your recommendation should cover both the strong and the weak points of each of the two essays.

The Idea Draft

A lot of people think that when writers actually begin to write, the words flow out of them the way they will appear in the book or newspaper or magazine article that eventually gets published. That is far, far from being the case. In fact, it almost never happens that way. On the next page, for instance, is a page from a piece of writing by one of the authors of this book.

This is the place where we get to tell you the second secret professional writers have. Here it is:

- *Nobody gets it right the first time. Everybody* has to rewrite. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., a well-known and successful American novelist, said this about himself and his fellow writers: "Our power is patience. We have discovered that writing allows even a stupid person to seem halfway intelligent, if only that person will write the same thought over and over again, improving it just a little bit each time. It is a lot like inflating a blimp with a bicycle pump. Anybody can do it. All it takes is time."

There are two pieces of good news here, and one other bit of news that you may find surprising. The good news is

1. you have an edge; because you aren't stupid (or you wouldn't be in college), you have a head start on the writing process, and
2. hard as it is, writing is a lot easier than filling a blimp with a bicycle pump.

The (perhaps) surprising news is what Vonnegut is saying about rewriting. Notice that he doesn't talk about rewriting as going back to look for spelling mistakes or other kinds of errors; he talks about rewriting as improving the *ideas.*

Your first draft is not one in which you try to get everything right—try to get all the words spelled correctly, all the apostrophes in the right places, all the sentences correct. Not at all. If you try to do all that stuff, you won't be

able to concentrate on your ideas. The human mind can only do so much work at one time. Ever try to drive in heavy traffic and hold a serious or intense conversation at the same time? Or talk on the phone when someone in the room is talking to you? That's what you ask your mind to do if you try to get your ideas down *and* get all the mechanics correct too.

Your first draft is your *idea draft*. That's when you just get your ideas on paper. In the idea draft you try to say *what* you want to say (not *how* you want to say it) and get things in the order you want them. It's a draft that's a total mess. It looks horrible. But in many ways, the worse it looks, the better it is, because lots of changes and written-in stuff and crossed-out stuff all means that you are getting your ideas—the most important part of the paper—in shape.

Although the first draft is an idea draft, it's also the time to try to get the ideas in the order you want them, and part of that process is grouping them in paragraphs. You will learn more about paragraphs later, but you've already learned a lot. If you remember the diagram of an essay at the beginning of this chapter and all the paragraph examples you've seen, you will remember that paragraphs tend to be written in one way: with an introductory sentence or two telling what the paragraph will be about and then specific sentences that give the details.

In getting ready to write your first draft, group your ideas as you think you will write them in paragraphs. Organize the groups in the order you think you will want them. Write introductory (topic) sentences that seem to you to cover each of the groups. You might change your mind about the groupings or the order or what you have written as topic sentences later. That's not a problem. But you do have to start somewhere, and this is the place.

Idea Draft Assignment

Using your notes, write an idea draft of your report. Remember: This draft is *only* for getting your ideas on paper and in the order you want them. Many people like to double-space this draft so that when it becomes a mess, they can still read it. Others feel that single spacing makes it easier for them to see the whole thing. If you write your draft by hand, you may want to leave yourself wide margins for making changes