CONTENTS

PREFACE vii

PART 1. “THEY SAY”
1 “THEY SAY”: Starting with What Others Are Saying 1
2 “HER POINT IS”: The Art of Summarizing 2
3 “AS HE HIMSELF PUTS IT”: The Art of Quoting 3

PART 2. “I SAY”
4 “YES / NO / OKAY, BUT”: Three Ways to Respond 5
5 “AND YET”: Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say 6
6 “SKEPTICS MAY OBJECT”: Planting a Naysayer in Your Text 7
7 “SO WHAT? WHO CARES?”: Saying Why It Matters 8

PART 3. TYING IT ALL TOGETHER
8 “AS A RESULT”: Connecting the Parts 10
9 “AIN’T SO / IS NOT”: Academic Writing Doesn’t Always Mean Setting Aside Your Own Voice 12
10 “BUT DON’T GET ME WRONG”: The Art of Metacommentary 13
11 “HE SAYS CONTENDS”: Using the Templates to Revise 15

PART 4. IN SPECIFIC ACADEMIC CONTEXTS
12 “I TAKE YOUR POINT”: Entering Class Discussions 16
13 “IMHO”: Is Digital Communication Good or Bad—or Both? 17
14 “WHAT’S MOTIVATING THIS WRITER?”: Reading for the Conversation 19
15 “ANALYZE THIS”: Writing in the Social Sciences 20

READINGS
16 Is College the Best Option? 21
STEPHANIE OWEN AND ISABEL SAWHILL, Should Everyone Go to College? 21
SANFORD J. UNGAR, The New Liberal Arts 24
CHARLES MURRAY, Are Too Many People Going to College? 26
LIZ ADDISON, Two Years Are Better than Four 28
FREEMAN HRABOWSKI, Colleges Prepare People for Life 30
GERALD GRAFF, Hidden Intellectualism 33
MIKE ROSE, Blue-Collar Brilliance 35
MICHELLE OBAMA, Bowie State University Commencement Speech 37
17 Are We in a Race against the Machine?  
KEVIN KELLY, Better than Human: Why Robots Will—and Must—Take Our Jobs  
NICHOLAS CARR, Is Google Making Us Stupid?  
BROOKE GLADSTONE AND JOSH NEUFELD, The Influencing Machines  
CLIVE THOMPSON, Smarter than You Think: How Technology Is Changing Our Minds for the Better  
MICHAELA CULLINGTON, Does Texting Affect Writing?  
SHERRY TURKLE, No Need to Call  
JENNA WORTHAM, I Had a Nice Time with You Tonight. On the App.  
MALCOLM GLADWELL, Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted  

18 What Should We Eat?  
MICHAEL POLLAN, Escape from the Western Diet  
STEVEN SHAPIN, What Are You Buying When You Buy Organic?  
MARY MAXFIELD, Food as Thought: Resisting the Moralization of Eating  
JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER, Against Meat  
DAVID ZINCZENKO, Don’t Blame the Eater  
RADLEY BALKO, What You Eat Is Your Business  
MICHAEL MOSS, The Extraordinary Science of Addictive Junk Food  
MARION NESTLE, The Supermarket: Prime Real Estate  
DAVID H. FREEDMAN, How Junk Food Can End Obesity  

19 What’s Up with the American Dream?  
DAVID LEONHARDT, Inequality Has Been Going on Forever . . . but That Doesn’t Mean It’s Inevitable  
EDWARD McCLELLAND, RIP, the Middle Class: 1946–2013  
PAUL KRUGMAN, Confronting Inequality  
GARY S. BECKER AND KEVIN M. MURPHY, The Upside of Income Inequality  
MONICA POTTS, What’s Killing Poor White Women?  
BRANDON KING, The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or on Hold?  
TIM ROEMER, America Remains the World’s Beacon of Success  
SHAYAN ZADEH, Bring on More Immigrant Entrepreneurs  
PEW RESEARCH TEAM, King’s Dream Remains an Elusive Goal; Many Americans See Racial Disparities  

20 What’s Gender Got to Do with It?  
SHERYL SANDBERG, Lean In: What Would You Do If You Weren’t Afraid?  
BELL HOOKS, Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In  
ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER, Why Women Still Can’t Have It All  
RICHARD DORMENT, Why Men Still Can’t Have It All  
STEPHEN MAYS, What about Gender Roles in Same-Sex Relationships?  
DENNIS BARON, Facebook Multiplies Genders but Offers Users the Same Three Tired Pronouns
ELLEN ULLMAN, How to Be a “Woman Programmer” 112
SAUL KAPLAN, The Plight of Young Males 115
PENELOPE ECKERT AND SALLY McCONNELL-GINET, Learning to Be Gendered 117
TWO SAMPLE SYLLABI 119
In the summer of 2005, my colleague at Fontbonne University in St. Louis, Rose Shapiro, handed me a little green book that was to be our new textbook for the first-year writing courses. At first, I wondered why we needed such a book—we hadn’t had a common text in the past, and each course had a different thematic focus. However, Rose was enthusiastic about the approach of Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. “This book will help students learn how to argue,” she said.

Throughout the year, I realized that Rose was right. Students began to understand that arguments happened in conversation, they incorporated quotes more smoothly, and they considered the “so what?” factor in their arguments. As I continued to teach with the first edition of “They Say / I Say”: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, I thought that it could use more readings and also that it would be helpful if it included an instructor’s guide.

I was therefore thrilled when I saw the first edition of “They Say / I Say”: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, with Readings. I used it to teach a course focused on the theme of inequality, and students began to see how essays could be part of a larger conversation, whether or not the authors explicitly responded to each other. The range of opinions in the book was welcome in the classroom, where conservative, moderate, and liberal students debated issues such as school funding and tax policy.

In addition, I found myself using the techniques described by the authors in my own scholarly work, especially as I applied to and entered the PhD program at the University of Cincinnati. Graduate students also need to construct their arguments in response to what others are saying, and my work benefitted from using the “they say / I say” approach.

At the University of Cincinnati, I continued to use the book in my teaching, and I was honored when Russel Durst asked me to serve as a research assistant for the second and third editions and to author the instructor’s notes for both editions. I believe wholeheartedly that academic writing at any level requires a knowledge of what “they say” and how it impacts what “I say,” and that when students understand this, they will find writing arguments more manageable.

This third edition includes updated topics and new essays on issues my students often debate among themselves on their own: whether college is the best option, what the perils and pleasures of technology are, what we should be eating, whether it’s possible to achieve the American Dream after the Great Recession, and how traditional gender roles are being both preserved and upended. I look forward to
exploring the viewpoints of our many authors with my students as they begin to
practice the skills of listening and offering their perspectives.

The instructor’s notes include brief summaries of the rhetoric chapters (1–15),
as well as additional activities to supplement the exercises included in the book itself.
These activities include both written and spoken exercises, based on my belief that
“prewriting” can include speaking. In all of the activities, students get to practice the
skills taught in the book.

In addition, you will find short summaries of each of the essays in Chapters 16–
20, as well as teaching notes, lists of related essays, and answers to the “Joining the
Conversation” questions. For these, I do not include answers to the questions that are
writing prompts for students. Also included are two sample syllabi so that
instructors can see various ways of putting the book’s approach into practice, for a
themed course or for one with varied topics, and for a 10-week or 16-week course.

I am grateful to Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst for the oppor-
tunity to work on this manual. Great thanks also go to Marilyn Moller, Ariella Foss,
and Claire Wallace at Norton. Thank you to Mark Gallagher for composing answers
to the “Joining the Conversation” questions for the first edition of this book.

Thanks also to all the great teachers I have had as colleagues at George Mason
University, Fontbonne University, and the University of Cincinnati. Your own teaching
practices continually inspire me. Thanks to friends and family, and to my wonderful
husband, who was a great source of support while I worked on this project.

And, finally, thanks to the late Rose Shapiro, for introducing me to this book and
for being a passionate teacher. We miss you.
Chapter 1 begins with an implied “they say”: that a claim can stand on its own. The authors counter that good academic writing responds to what others are saying. This chapter provides methods for addressing what “they say,” including templates for introducing standard views, “they say” statements that the writer agrees with, things implied or assumed, and ongoing debates. While Chapter 2 focuses on longer summaries, this chapter establishes what writers need to do early in a paper, such as present the “they say” and “I say” as a single, concise unit.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Identifying What “They Say”

Have students read one (or more) of the following: the first four paragraphs of Liz Addison’s “Two Years are Better than Four” [p. 255]; the first four paragraphs of Sherry Turkle’s “No Need to Call” [p. 373]; the first three paragraphs of Mary Maxfield’s “Food as Thought: Resisting the Moralization of Eating” [p. 442]; the first two paragraphs of Saul Kaplan’s “The Plight of Young Males” [p. 732]; or the first paragraph of Brandon King’s “The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or on Hold?” [p. 610].

Ask them to annotate the paragraphs, noting where the “they say” argument is included. Talk as a class about the tone of the essays as “they say” statements are addressed, as well as about the placement of the statements within the paragraphs.

Sustaining What “They Say”

Have students pick a template in the chapter (or assign a specific one), and ask them to complete it as a sentence about a topic of their choice. Then have students use the sentence to start a quick five-minute freewrite about their topic, trying to include both a “they say” and an “I say.” Once they’re finished, ask a few students to share what they wrote. How much time did they spend detailing the “they say” part of the argument before moving on to the “I say”? What did they find most challenging when writing about what “they say”? (This assignment works best as an end to Chapter 1 and transition to Chapter 2.)
“HER POINT IS”

The Art of Summarizing

Chapter 2 teaches students how to write an extended version of what “they say.” The authors explain what a summary is, and some students may need help understanding the difference between summary and paraphrase. The chapter gives students strategies for writing summaries—playing the “believing game,” keeping your own argument in mind as you choose what points to focus on, writing a satiric summary—as well as warnings about common tendencies of those inexperienced at writing summaries, such as the “closest cliché” syndrome and the list summary. For students struggling with the closest cliché syndrome, you might suggest taking a look at Chapter 14 (on “Reading for the Conversation”). At the end of the chapter the authors include a helpful list of signal verbs that students can turn to if they find themselves using the same verbs over and over again.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

List Summary Writing and Revision

Have students read the description of list summaries on pages 35–36. Then have them write a list summary of David Zinczenko’s “Don’t Blame the Eater” [p. 462]; Jenna Wortham’s “I Had a Nice Time with You Tonight. On the App” [p. 393]; or another essay you’ve discussed as a class. Have one or two students read their summaries out loud, and discuss as a class the flaws of this style. Then have students cut up the summaries into separate sentences and reorganize them, or ask them to edit the transitions between sentences to show more explicitly than “and” or “then” how the ideas relate. Study the revised summaries to see how they avoid being “list-y.” (May take at least two class periods.)

Summary Writing and Review

Either during class or on their own, have students write a short summary (no more than a paragraph or one double-spaced, typed page) of Jenna Wortham’s “I Had a Nice Time with You Tonight. On the App” [p. 393] or another essay you’ve discussed as a class. Let them know if you want them to write a summary that could function as a “they say” to an argument they themselves might make. Then have students read and respond to one another’s summaries in small groups. If you’d like, you too can read them and give feedback after class. Another alternative would be to have students revise the summaries after the peer review.
THREE

“AS HE HIMSELF PUTS IT”

The Art of Quoting

This chapter introduces the strategy of quoting what others say. The authors warn students that quoting too little or too much can hurt an argument, and that it’s important to frame any quotations. The chapter offers a few tips for finding relevant quotes and gives a helpful example of a “dangling” or “hit-and-run” quotation from a paper about Susan Bordo’s ideas. It also explains a strategy the authors call a “quotation sandwich” for introducing and explaining quotations, and an example of how the Bordo quote might be better framed. It could help your students to read both of those examples out loud in class and to discuss the differences. Some students may think that talking too much about a quotation is “overanalysis,” and the final section in the chapter will help to respond to their concerns.

Options for Exercise 1

This exercise asks students to analyze how quotations are used in some published piece of writing. Here are some examples they might use:

MICHELLE OBAMA, “Bowie State University Commencement Speech” [p. 289, ¶12, the Douglass quote]

RICHARD DORMENT, “Why Men Still Can’t Have It All” [p. 707, ¶22–23, the Slaughter quote]

BRANDON KING, “The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or On Hold?” [p. 612, ¶4, the Reich quote]

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Making a Quotation Sandwich

Choose a sentence from an essay the class is reading or use the example below. Explain to students what argument or claim the quote will help develop, and ask them to develop a quotation sandwich, starting with the claim, then the “top slice” of an introduction, then the quote (cited properly, if necessary), then the “bottom slice” explanation. Students can do this individually, or you can have them work in groups or do it as a class. If they are working on their own or in small groups, walk around the room to see how their sandwiches are developing. Point out any missing elements as needed, and pick one or two examples to share with the class. The explanation is
often the most difficult step of this process for students, so examples may help them understand what sort of intellectual work that portion of the sandwich does.

*The claim:* Students should think carefully about their choice of major if they want a good return on investment for their college degree.

*The quote:* Stephanie Owen and Isabel Sawhill: “According to Census’s calculations, the lifetime earnings of an education or arts major working the service sector are actually lower than the average lifetime earnings of a high school graduate” (p. 216).

*Follow-up activity:* Have students try this activity with a draft they’re working on, first developing a claim, choosing a quote that supports that claim, and “sandwiching” the quote properly.

**When Part of the Sandwich Is Missing**

The following quotes are missing part of the quotation sandwich. Ask students to consider how they might supply the missing part, either by adding an introduction or an explanation, as needed:

*Richard Doremont,* “Why Men Still Can’t Have It All” [p. 708, ¶24, Galinsky’s quote]

*Michaela Cullington,* “Does Texting Affect Writing?” [p. 368, ¶18, Baron’s quote]

*Monica Potts,* “What’s Killing Poor White Women?” [p. 598, ¶21, Jackson’s quote]

*An alternative:* Have students find missing elements of the quotation sandwich in their own drafts and revise those paragraphs. (Sometimes, the missing element will be the point the quotation is supporting, especially in paragraphs that begin with a quote.)
This chapter, the first in the “I Say” section, details the three major forms of response: agree, disagree, and agree, but with a difference. After explaining that students should feel as though they have something to say that matters, the authors recommend stating an argument clearly and early in a paper. They discuss how interpretive arguments (such as those about art or literature) also fall into the “they say”/“I say” mode. They also explain that all three types of response require reasons and evidence, and provide numerous templates to help students understand how more complex sentences can say “I agree” or “I disagree.” A final section addresses students’ concerns about expressing ambivalence; it might be helpful to have a conversation about the difference between a complex argument and being wishy-washy.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

A Local Issues Argument

Pick an issue affecting your school or community, and state an argument related to that issue (for example: “Because parking is such a problem on campus, students should take public transportation”). Have students respond to that statement by using a template from each of the three sections, one agreeing, one disagreeing, and one agreeing and disagreeing. Alternately, you could have them pick one of the three stances to use in response to your argument. Have some students share what they’ve written and discuss how they phrased their agreement, disagreement, or both.

An Argument Circle

You’ll want to arrange desks in a circle for this exercise if you can. Pick an issue affecting your school or community, and come up with an argument related to that issue, as in the previous exercise. State your argument out loud, and then ask the next person in the circle to agree, disagree, or both. The following student (Student 2) should summarize Student 1’s argument and then agree, disagree, or both. Student 3 should summarize the crux of Student 2’s argument, and then agree, disagree, or both. Continue around the circle forming new arguments, or if the ideas start to become muddled, begin a new argument.
This chapter introduces students to the term voice markers in order to help them distinguish the “I say” from the “they say.” Using an example from social critic Gregory Mantsios, the authors show which arguments are his own and which are ones he disagrees with. Templates help students with specific ways of signaling who is saying what, and of embedding voice markers. This chapter also provides an opportunity to discuss effective uses of the first person.

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Evaluating Use of the First Person**

Have students look at several essays that use the first person and evaluate (1) how and why the author uses “I” or “we” and (2) if that perspective is effective. Some examples: Liz Addison’s “Two Years Are Better than Four” [p. 255]; Mike Rose’s “Blue-Collar Brilliance” [p. 272]; Nicholas Carr’s “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” [p. 313]; Clive Thompson’s “Smarter than You Think: How Technology Is Changing Our Minds for the Better” [p. 340]; Jenna Wortham’s “I Had a Nice Time with You Tonight. On the App” [p. 393]; Jonathan Safran Foer’s “Against Meat” [p. 448]; Tim Roemer’s “America Remains the World’s Beacon of Success” [p. 618]; Shayan Zadeh’s “Bring on More Immigrant Entrepreneurs” [p. 623]; Sheryl Sandberg’s “Lean In: What Would You Do If You Weren’t Afraid?” [p. 642]; or Ellen Ullman’s “How to Be a ‘Woman Programmer’” [p. 726]. If your students have not read the essays in full, find particular paragraphs for them to focus on instead.

**Recasting Point of View**

Ask students to recast something they’ve written (no more than a paragraph) in a different point of view: from first to third person, or vice versa. Once they’ve done so, have a few students read the examples out loud and discuss what is gained and lost in both points of view.
In Chapter 6, students are introduced to a different sort of “they say”: the naysayer. Unlike the “they say,” which appears early in the paper and establishes the conversation the writer is responding to, a naysayer appears later, after the writer has made some of his or her own arguments and begins to imagine possible objections to them. The chapter explains that including a naysayer increases their credibility as writers and helps what they have to say about the topic. The authors recommend staying with a naysayer discussion for a few sentences or a full paragraph in order to treat that point of view fairly, and they even suggest labeling naysayers. Students who worry such labeling will result in stereotyping might be encouraged to choose those labels carefully and to qualify their statements, as some of the templates in the chapter show. As students work on including naysayers in their writing, it might help them to play Peter Elbow’s “believing game” (described in Chapter 2). Note that they may need some help answering objections effectively, and that the templates on “making concessions while still standing your ground” (p. 89) will be helpful.

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Playing the Role of the Naysayer**

Students should work in small groups (2–4 people). Each student should state an argument, perhaps one for a draft he or she is writing. Each of the other group members should think of an objection to that argument and also give themselves a label. For example, in reaction to a paper arguing for gun control, one group member might say, “I’m a hunter, and I think that I should be able to use guns for sport,” and another might say, “I’m a gun seller, and more permit requirements would hurt my business.” After the group discussions, ask students what other perspectives might be helpful naysayers in their papers.

**“That’s Just Wrong”**

Find an example of a text that does not represent objections fairly but says, “that’s just wrong” or mocks the opposite point of view (perhaps on a political blog). Have students read the text, and ask them how the author represents points of view and how the author’s tone affects their experience reading the text.
SEVEN

“SO WHAT? WHO CARES?”

Saying Why It Matters

This chapter explains the importance of addressing the “so what?” and “who cares?” questions when making an argument and offers specific strategies and templates for doing so. Students’ papers will become stronger once they begin to address these questions, as doing so shows that their arguments are part of a larger conversation and that what they are saying matters. The authors urge students to consider who has a stake in an argument (“who cares?”), as well as what the larger consequences of the argument are (“so what?”). Although “who cares?” or “so what?” statements work in many different parts of a paper, students who struggle with introductions or conclusions might find it helpful to address these questions there.

Options for Exercise 1

These essays may serve as good examples for evaluating how texts address the “so what?” and “who cares?” questions in their arguments: Liz Addison’s “Two Years Are Better than Four” [p. 255]; Steven Shapin’s “What Are You Buying When You Buy Organic?” [p. 428]; Nicholas Carr’s “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” [p. 313]; and Paul Krugman’s “Confronting Inequality” [p. 561].

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Asking and Answering “So What?” and “Who Cares?”

When students have a draft of a paper written, ask them to write either their major claim or a sub-claim on a piece of paper. Then ask them to brainstorm for five minutes about all the groups who have a stake in their argument (“who cares?”). Next have them freewrite for another five minutes or more about why those groups care or why the topic matters (“so what?”). Have a few students share what they’ve written, and add to their “who cares?” and “so what?” lists as a class. Alternately, you could have students expand their lists in small groups. Finally, you might have them draft a paragraph (perhaps an introduction or conclusion to the draft) incorporating the “so what?” and “who cares?” factors.

Role-playing the One Who Cares

Students should work in small groups (2–4 people). Each student should state a claim, perhaps one for a draft he or she is writing. Each of the other group members should think of a group that has a stake in that argument and why the argument
matters to them, stating both in the first person. For example, in reaction to a paper arguing that school lunches should be healthier, one group member might say, “I’m a student, and this topic matters to me because I want to eat french fries for lunch, and I don’t care if I get tired later in the day.” Another might say, “I’m a nutritionist, and this topic matters to me because I want children in my community to be healthy as they grow up.” You can even give students the template, “I’m ___________, and this topic matters to me because ______________.” Have students continue to give suggestions until no one else can think of another group with a stake in the issue.
This chapter discusses the “connective tissues” of writing. The authors emphasize that creating connections between sentences and ideas both increases sentence variety and helps construct a more convincing argument. They consider transitions both within a paragraph and between paragraphs, and they discuss four ways to “connect the parts”: using transition terms, adding pointing words, developing key terms, and repeating yourself, with a difference.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Between Paragraphs / Within Paragraphs

Part 1: This activity works best when students have a draft to work with. After discussing ways of connecting the parts, have them look at their drafts and annotate them, noting what each paragraph is saying. Then have them write a sentence that shows the relationship between the ideas in each paragraph.

Part 2: Have students choose a key paragraph of the paper they want to improve and note what transitions, pointing words, and key terms they’ve used. Then ask them to do a sort of dissection, looking at sets of sentences to note what purpose they serve in the paragraph. After they do so, they should revise sentences to include transitions, pointing words, or key terms. Taking the paragraph apart can help them see the “chunks” of meaning in the paragraph and how connecting words can help those chunks fit together.

Connective Tissue

The following is a paragraph from Dennis Baron’s “Facebook Multiplies Genders but Offers Users the Same Three Tired Pronouns” with all the transitions and other “connective tissue” removed. Ask students to read it once and evaluate what they think about how it’s working. Then ask them to add transitions (either individually or in groups) and perhaps share a few examples once they’ve finished. End by having them read the paragraph as it appears in the book (p. 723, ¶7) to see how the writer himself uses connective tissue.

Only the third person singular English pronouns have gender: *he, she,* and *it.* Anderson wanted all of our first and second person pronouns, both singular and plural, and the third person plural, to express all of the thirteen genders. Seventy-
eight pronouns instead of the current eight. He preferred each pronoun to have two alternates, for the times when the same pronoun must refer to different people. The first male referred to would be he, the second, hei, the third, ho. That makes 234 pronouns. That’s just counting the nominative case. If you add the possessives and accusatives, which every pronoun needs, well, you do the math.
This chapter argues that students can blend formal, academic language with more everyday, colloquial language. The authors caution that students shouldn’t “fall back on colloquial usage as an excuse for not learning more rigorous forms of expression,” but they point out that a mixture of academic and casual language can enliven an essay and help writers underscore points they want to call attention to. They teach one interesting technique: to state something formally and then “translate” it into everyday language, providing examples from Geneva Smitherman and Gloria Anzaldúa. You’ll want to remind students to consider genre and audience when thinking about language choices, and as the chapter notes, to remember that blending formal and informal language is appropriate in some fields more than in others.

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Two Sample Essays**

Ask students to read Richard Dorment’s “Why Men Still Can’t Have it All” [p. 697] and David Freedman’s “How Junk Food Can End Obesity” [p. 506]. As a class, discuss how these two writers incorporate their own colloquial voices into their writing. Ask students to find representative samples of language that exemplify the writers’ own styles. This activity might be a good jumping-off-point for Exercise 1 in the book.

**Dressing Down the Draft**

This activity works best later in the writing process. Have students bring in a draft of a paper, and do the activities in Exercise 1 (p. 128) with a chosen paragraph: “Dress it down, rewriting it in informal colloquial language. Then rewrite the same paragraph again by dressing it up, making it much more formal. Then rewrite the paragraph one more time in a way that blends the two styles.”

Alternately, this activity could work well in a group: each student could bring in a paragraph, and group members could exchange paragraphs, dressing other students’ work down and up.
In this chapter, the authors explain what *metacommentary* is and encourage students to use it in their writing. Students are unlikely to have heard of metacommentary before reading this book, so an explanation of the term would be helpful. As the end of the first paragraph indicates, metacommentary tells an audience how to interpret what has been said. It is “a way of commenting on your claims and telling others how—and how not—to think about them” (p. 129). The authors point out that other methods discussed in the book—“entertaining objections, adding transitions, framing quotations, answering ‘so what?’ and ‘who cares?’” (p. 134)—do the work of metacommentary, and they explain that metacommentary helps prevent readers from getting confused and leads to a more developed paper. A quote from Neil Postman and numerous templates demonstrate how metacommentary can be used, and a section on titles could be a good jumping-off point for discussing how to write titles.

**Options for Exercise 1**

Gerald Graff, “Hidden Intellectualism” [p. 264]
Brooke Gladstone and Josh Neufeld, “The Influencing Machines” [p. 330]
Michael Pollan, “Escape from the Western Diet” [p. 420]

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**A Metacommentary Exchange**

Have students bring in two copies of a draft and work in pairs. One student should ask the other a series of questions: What are you arguing here? What is this part of the essay doing? Why is this quote important? The writer should answer the questions out loud, with the questioner taking notes. Students should then switch roles. Once they’ve both completed the questions, they should exchange the notes they took and consider what if anything they’ve said would work as metacommentary in their papers.

**Titles Workshop**

Have students submit the working titles of their papers, and do a title workshop as a class. This activity would work best if students submit them by email or in a previous class period so that you can create a handout with all of the titles. Have students read the section on titles in Chapter 10 (pp. 133–34), and then discuss each title,
analyzing what it suggests about the paper and if it gets readers’ attention. Have students suggest alternatives or ask questions about the paper itself. It will help students to see some model titles, so you might discuss the titles of some of the essays in the book. You could also introduce the two-part titles that are so common in academic writing, which allows writers to both state the subject of the paper in the title and give some idea about what they have to say about it in a subtitle.
This chapter pays particular attention to a specific stage of the writing process: revision. The authors include a checklist of questions writers can ask themselves to consider global changes to their work: (1) How Do You Represent What Others Say?, (2) What Do You Say?, (3) Have You Introduced Any Naysayers?, (4) Have You Used Metacommentary to Clarify What You Do or Don’t Mean?, (5) Have You Tied It All Together?, and (6) Have You Shown Why Your Argument Matters? The chapter also includes a revised student essay by Antonia Peacocke. A brief introduction explains that Peacocke initially wrote this piece for her high school newspaper and then revised it to make it a college-level academic essay. The annotated essay follows, emphasizing how Peacocke used the moves taught in the book—and reinforced in the checklist—to strengthen her essay.

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Checklists in Action**

Have students use the checklist (or a particular section of the checklist) to evaluate a draft in progress. This task could be either self-evaluation or peer review. The authors note that the questions in this chapter might be most useful if students don’t have “specific comments and suggestions from a teacher” yet or “aren’t sure what to do” with those comments, but you might also use them when you respond to student drafts as well.
“I TAKE YOUR POINT”

Entering Class Discussions

This is a chapter that you may want to have students read early in the term, especially if they are first-year students. Point out to students that the concepts you will discuss (or have discussed) in relation to writing also work in spoken arguments and in discussion. Templates show students how to frame their comments as a response to something that’s been said, to change the subject explicitly, and to be even more explicit than in writing.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Using Framing in a Discussion

Early in the semester or quarter, have a class discussion that includes conscious framing. Have students read Chapter 12. Start a discussion on a topic affecting the school or local community, or maybe even discuss class discussions themselves: what have students experienced in the past, and what do they think works well—or not—in a discussion setting? As the conversation progresses, make sure students are framing their comments according to the templates, and if they are unsure how, help them with the framing.
At the beginning of this chapter, the authors describe a number of debates surrounding the use of technology and its effects on our learning. Some argue that the internet and online technologies make us smarter—and better writers—since we have access to more information than ever before. But others argue that such technologies make us dumber—we become overwhelmed by the number of sources available and often communicate in “reductive sound-bites” to get our message across as quickly as possible. Our writing suffers as a result. After summarizing other points of view, the authors of this textbook state their “I say”: “Though we agree that the internet has given us access to previous unimaginable stores of information and greatly expanded our range of communication—and that it potentially broadens our perspectives—we think the critics have a point in noting that many conversations on the web are not exchanges so much as monologues in which writers pass one another without intersecting.” They also point out that students who struggle to “reach audiences in one medium” will struggle in others, and they offer an example of a course listserv in which one student’s response didn’t make clear the “they say” point to which he was responding. In the end, the purpose of this chapter is to raise various perspectives on the issue and encourage students to figure out where they stand.

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Putting the Readings into the Conversation**

Have your class read some or all of the selections in Chapter 17, and relate the arguments made by its authors to the many views expressed in Chapter 13; for example, would Nicholas Carr agree, disagree, or both with Andrea Lunsford? How about Sherry Turkle? Would she agree, disagree, or both with the Graffs’ argument? If your students have trouble relating any essays in this unit to the views described in Chapter 13, have them write a new paragraph explaining how that author is widening the debate about the effects of digital communication.

**Before and After Debates**

If you intend to read most or all of the essays in Chapter 17, you might have two class debates about this question: “Is digital communication good or bad—or both?” The first debate could take place before you read Chapters 13 and 17, to see what students think about the issue on their own or from other sources. Then, after you’ve read
those chapters as a class, you could have a second debate on the question, asking students to bring in evidence from their reading as part of the discussion. Ask them at the end of the class period: How did this debate differ from the first?
As the authors suggest, class discussion can fall flat if the instructor begins with a question about the author’s argument. Try using the questions they suggest, such as “What other argument(s) is the writer responding to?” Some students may struggle with this question at the beginning of the term, but Chapters 1 and 5 should help them begin to identify the parts of the conversation. Have students read the excerpt by David Zinczenko on page 176 and see if they can identify his argument without reading the explanation that follows. Also have them read the section on “Reading Particularly Challenging Texts” before reading a particularly challenging text such as bell hooks’s “Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In” (p. 659) or Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet’s “Learning to Be Gendered” (p. 736). Choose a paragraph from those essays, and ask students to translate it into their own words, either in writing or out loud as a class.
Chapter 15 applies the concepts of “They Say / I Say” to the social sciences. Erin Ackerman, a political science professor, explains how an introduction in the social sciences includes both “they say” and “I say,” and she offers many examples and templates of how that works in writing in these fields. She describes how a literature review expands the “they say” by summarizing many arguments at once, and she points out that analysis of data, whether quantitative or qualitative, enables a social scientist to create an “I say.” Writers in the social sciences need to define data, explain where the data comes from, and then explain what is done with the data, according to Ackerman.

Even if students are not social science majors, this chapter would help them see the “They Say / I Say” concepts in action in a particular field. As a class, you could discuss how the terms might be applied in several different fields, especially if you have students with varying majors.

**ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES**

**Writing across Disciplines**

If you have a class of many different majors, you could ask each student to bring in an example of academic writing in their field and analyze its properties, much as Ackerman has done for the social sciences. Many of the elements that are used in the social sciences—literature review, methodology, and so on—will apply in other disciplines.
Stephanie Owen and Isabel Sawhill answer the question of their report’s title in the negative. “By telling all young people that they should go to college no matter what, we are actually doing some of them a disservice” (¶1), they argue. The authors feel it’s important that students get a return on the cost of their education, and they analyze previous studies to demonstrate that although college graduates tend to earn more than their less educated peers over a lifetime, the variety of majors chosen and colleges attended means that a particular individual may not do as well as his or her peers with a high school degree. For example, Owen and Sawhill note that college students lose the opportunity to earn money while they are in school. Although they acknowledge that there are “non-monetary benefits of schooling” (¶5), they focus primarily on the money earned and the cost of attending college. The selectivity of a school, its financial aid packages, and the student’s chances for future employment all factor into the return on investment rate, Owen and Sawhill argue, and they offer three solutions to improving the value of bachelor’s degrees for every student: more transparency about schools and the financial aid process, encouragement for students to graduate, and “more good alternatives to a traditional academic path, including career and technical education and apprenticeships” (¶26).

Teaching Notes
Students may not be familiar with the Brookings Institution, which published this report, and from which Owen and Sawhill draw some of their data. You might visit the Brookings Institution website together as a class or ask students to do so on their own. Also, have students investigate what PayScale says about the return on investment for your particular institution, if it’s listed on their website.

Related Essays
CHARLES MURRAY, “Are Too Many People Going to College?” [p. 234]
LIZ ADDISON, “Two Years Are Better than Four” [p. 255]
FREEMAN HRABOWSKI, “Colleges Prepare People for Life” [p. 259]
MIKE ROSE, “Blue-Collar Brilliance” [p. 272]
Joining the Conversation

1. Stephanie Owen and Isabel Sawhill announce the “they say” in their second sentence—“Study after study reminds us that higher education is one of the best investments we can make . . .”—and then proceed to report on how the return on that investment varies. What factors do they say make college a questionable investment?

   Owen and Sawhill note that the “opportunity cost of college” (¶4) means that students temporarily earn less than their peers who start working after high school. They also note that variations in the type of school (¶9), the financial aid offered (¶10), the major chosen (¶12–14), and the completion rates (¶16) mean that some students’ college debt doesn’t lead to the increase in earnings that statistics would imply they’ll see.

2. This report draws upon quite a bit of quantitative data on the economic effects of graduating from college. Look carefully at one of the graphs that Owen and Sawhill provide, and explain in your own words what the data say.

   Graphs include: Figure 1, which shows that lifetime earnings for those with a bachelor’s degree are higher than those with high school diplomas, though the ratio of the difference is strongest for people in their forties and less so for those in their twenties or sixties; Figure 2, which demonstrates the vast differences in the return on investment (ROI) depending on the selectivity of the school and whether it is public or private; Figure 3, which highlights the higher lifetime earnings of STEM majors versus those in the humanities; Figure 4, which shows the vast differences in earnings based on occupation; and Figure 5, which points out that students at less competitive schools have a much lower six-year graduation rate.

3. Owen and Sawhill’s analysis seems to favor baccalaureate degree programs as conferring the greatest advantages upon students. How might Liz Addison, whose essay appears on pp. 255–58, respond to their argument?

   Owen and Sawhill point out that schools that offer associate’s degrees have lower completion rates, and they include the often-cited fact that associate’s degree holders earn more than those with a high school diploma but less than those with bachelor’s degrees. Owen and Sawhill also focus on four-year programs for most of
their analysis. However, they do point out that for some students, “the most bang-for-the-buck will come from a vocationally-oriented associate’s degrees or career-specific technical training” (¶25). Liz Addison argues that community colleges offer students the chance to attend an affordable college and begin their intellectual journey. She would support their solution that more students could benefit from an associate’s degree but would perhaps encourage them to deepen their analysis on community college students and their accomplishments after obtaining their associate’s degree.

4. In the essay’s concluding paragraphs, the authors note information students and parents should know before choosing a college. What information do they consider most important? What did you know and what did you not know about colleges you were considering as you were deciding which school to attend? How might additional knowledge have helped you make a more informed choice?

Students’ answers for this question will vary. Some will have prioritized cost, including financial aid and other incentives (like scholarships for merit, athletic activity, or the arts). Others will have chosen a college based on the majors offered, the distance from home, or the friends they might have there. Also, while some may have been well educated about the idea of return on investment for their school, others likely won’t have considered that.
In “The New Liberal Arts,” Sanford J. Ungar, president of Goucher College, argues that a liberal arts education is still relevant in today’s economy. He identifies and rebuts seven misperceptions about a liberal arts degree, noting that employers are not looking for vocationally trained graduates but rather individuals who can think critically and communicate effectively. He argues that low-income and first-generation college students especially should thrive in a liberal arts setting. Ungar also says that a liberal arts education does not make U.S. graduates less competitive in a global economy. Despite the high costs of college, he says, “the net cost of attending a small liberal-arts college can be lower than that of a large public university” (¶19). He advocates for such small, residential colleges and encourages “close interaction between faculty members and students” (¶18).

Teaching Notes

Have a conversation about Ungar’s “Misperception No. 5” and the terms liberal and conservative. Some of your students might associate them only with political stances, so it might be useful to discuss the meaning of the term liberal arts in this context.

Related Essays

Stephanie Owen and Isabel Sawhill, “Should Everyone Go to College?” [p. 208]
Charles Murray, “Are Too Many People Going to College?” [p. 234]
Liz Addison, “Two Years Are Better than Four” [p. 255]
Freeman Hrabowski, “Colleges Prepare People for Life” [p. 259]
Gerald Graff, “Hidden Intellectualism” [p. 264]
Michelle Obama, “Bowie State University Commencement Speech” [p. 285]

Joining the Conversation

1. Summarize in a few sentences the seven misperceptions that Sanford Ungar discusses. These of course are all things that “they say”— and that he uses to launch what he wants to say. How does calling them “misperceptions” affect the way you read his argument? Would you read it any differently if he instead called them “common assumptions”?

A sample summary: “A liberal arts education is too expensive in a troubling economy, and students—especially low-income and first-generation students—should focus on majors that will get them jobs. Emphasis on the liberal arts in higher education puts the United States at a disadvantage internationally and reflects a liberal political agenda.” Calling the points he responds to “misperceptions” explicitly marks them as
positions that he disagrees with. Students may say that the phrase “common assumptions” might confuse some readers who would conclude that Ungar supports those points. On a semantic level, an assumption is something taken for granted, while a misperception is something that has been observed from a flawed perspective.

2. See paragraph 6 where Geoffrey Garin suggests that “the responsibility of higher education today is to prepare people ‘for jobs that do not yet exist.’” Thus, according to Ungar, “It may be that studying the liberal arts is actually the best form of career education.” How would you respond to this claim?

Students’ responses to this question will vary, but you may want to spend some time making sure they understand both Garin’s assertion and Ungar’s argument. Some students will agree that the critical thinking and reasoning skills fostered in a liberal arts education prepare graduates for a variety of future careers, including those positions not yet created. Others will point to growing fields such as healthcare and energy technology that require practical and scientific backgrounds. Many students may have examples of people they know who struggled to get a job after graduating from a liberal arts program or who are working in a field unrelated to their degree.

3. Misperception number 5 relates liberal education to political affiliation. What does Ungar have to say on this issue, and what do you think about his response?

Some students may resist what they see as indoctrination to a liberal political agenda in the term **liberal arts**. They may be unable to separate the terms **liberal** and **conservative** from their political connotations, and so it would be a good idea to look up dictionary definitions of those two terms as a class. Ungar explains that “a liberal education, as properly defined above, has nothing whatsoever to do with politics” (¶14). He points out that its continuation of classical traditions is actually a more conservative approach, and a discussion that highlights the terminology at work would benefit students.

4. On what specific points do you think Ungar would agree with Charles Murray (pp. 234–54)? On what points would he be likely to disagree?

Sanford Ungar would agree with Murray that a liberal education matters, that “full participation in any culture requires familiarity with a body of core knowledge” (Murray ¶3). However, the two disagree about when that education should happen; Murray says that it should happen in K–8th grade, and Ungar urges all students to consider a liberal arts education in college. He would also disagree with Murray that those who are lower on what Murray calls “the ability ladder” (¶13) won’t get much out of college. Ungar says that “it is often the people who are newest to certain ideas and approaches who are the most original and inventive in the discussion and application of those ideas” (¶10).
In “Are Too Many People Going to College?” Charles Murray argues that the answer is “yes.” Although he thinks that a liberal arts background is important for cultural literacy, he says that this education should instead happen at the elementary and high school levels. In his view, a liberal arts degree is not the best option for most high school seniors. Only those with the strongest academic abilities will enjoy the hard work required for such a degree, while others would benefit more from vocational training. Murray argues that there are a number of career choices requiring vocational training with high salaries, and he gives an extended hypothetical example of a student who would make a better living as a good electrician than as a mediocre business manager. In addition, the physical campus setting of a college is less relevant when the internet makes library databases and distance learning possible. Murray concludes that the B.A. serves as a class distinction in a “class-riven” (¶42) country, and he argues that businesses shouldn’t use it as a benchmark for hiring.

Teaching Notes
Ask students about their response to Murray’s assertions that “every percentile down the ability ladder . . . the probability that a person will enjoy the hardest aspects of an activity goes down” (¶13) and that “seen dispassionately, getting a traditional education over four years is an odd way to enjoy spending one’s time” (¶16).

Related Essays
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MIKE ROSE, “Blue-Collar Brilliance” [p. 272]
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Joining the Conversation
1. The “I say” here is explicit: “too many people are going to college.” We know what Charles Murray thinks. But why does he think this? In the rest of his essay, he tells us why. Summarize his argument, noting all the reasons and evidence he gives to support his claim.

Murray is responding to the assertion that more people should be going to college, in part because “a mass democracy should encourage as many people as possible to become ‘capable and cultivated human beings’ in Mill’s sense,” as he puts it in para-
Murray responds in paragraph 2 that “for most students, the places to provide those basics [of a liberal education] are elementary and middle school,” not college. He agrees that the average student should know “about history, science, and great works of art, music, and literature,” as he says in paragraph 8, but he disagrees about when this learning should occur. He argues that in fact many people can have satisfying and rewarding careers that do not require college, especially since only a few people actually enjoy the experience of college. Murray uses the work of E. D. Hirsch Jr. to support his argument, as well as an extended example of a hypothetical student who would be a more qualified engineer than a liberal arts-educated manager.

2. Is Murray right—are too many people going to college? If you disagree, why? Whether or not you agree with him, do you find his argument persuasive?

Students’ answers to this question will vary: some will agree that college isn’t necessary for everyone and that other paths such as vocational training are more suitable. Others will agree with authors like Ungar that a liberal arts education can benefit anyone and that it prepares students for a constantly changing workforce. Still others might agree that although it might not be right or fair, our culture deems the B.A. an important distinction that is necessary for success.

3. In the middle of the essay is a lengthy narrative about someone who is trying to decide what to be when he grows up, an electrician or a manager. What does this narrative contribute to Murray’s argument? Where would the argument be without the narrative?

The hypothetical story supports Murray’s argument that “getting a B.A. is still going to be the wrong economic decision for many high-school graduates” (¶30). Because he is discussing an economic situation, it is useful to show exactly how the numbers would add up for the man’s two possible career paths. The narrative is specific evidence for Murray’s claim; some students may argue that it’s hypothetical and not an actual story, but others will say that the narrative is key evidence for his claim since he doesn’t offer other kinds of evidence (statistics, expert quotation, etc.).

4. Compare Murray’s argument that college is a waste of time for many with Sanford Ungar’s argument (pp. 226–33) that anyone can benefit from a college education. Which one do you find more convincing?

Students’ own opinions will vary, but Murray argues that “liberal education in college means taking on the tough stuff” (¶9) that some students don’t benefit from. He encourages students who have other skills to have vocational training or learn on the job. Ungar disputes the arguments of people like Murray, decrying a “career education’ bandwagon” that “seems to suggest that shortcuts are available to students that lead directly to high-paying jobs, leaving out ‘frills’ like learning how to write and speak well” (¶4).
In response to a *New York Times* opinion piece by Rick Perlstein, Liz Addison argues that the college experience Perlstein mourns is still found at community colleges. A community college graduate, Addison uses her own story to demonstrate that such institutions can be a place for students of many backgrounds to “begin,” and she worries that some students are being discouraged from applying to community colleges. These schools offer a first step towards higher education for both low-income and low-performing students, and Addison concludes that community colleges are “one of America’s uniquely great institutions” (¶9).

**Teaching Notes**

Rick Perlstein’s opinion piece, “What’s the Matter with College,” and the other student essays that respond to Perlstein are available online through the *New York Times* (or through your institution’s library databases). You could have students read Perlstein’s piece and write their own responses.

**Related Essays**

*Stephanie Owen and Isabel Sawhill,* “Should Everyone Go to College?” [p. 208]

*Sanford J. Ungar,* “The New Liberal Arts” [p. 226]

*Charles Murray,* “Are Too Many People Going to College?” [p. 234]

*Freeman Hrabowski,* “Colleges Prepare People for Life” [p. 259]

*Mike Rose,* “Blue-Collar Brilliance” [p. 272]

**Joining the Conversation**

1. What view is Liz Addison responding to? Write out a sentence or two summarizing the “they say.”

   Addison responds to Rick Perlstein’s assertion that “college as America used to understand it is coming to an end,” that current students are not, as she puts it in paragraph 6, “worldly, insightful, cultured, mature.” She also argues against the implicit “they say” statement that community colleges are meant only for low-income, low-achieving students. Sample “they say” summaries: “College culture is not as strong as it used to be because students now are less insightful and mature” or “Community college is only for those who can’t succeed in a four-year college.”

2. Addison discusses her own educational experience as part of her argument. What role does this use of autobiographical narrative play in her argument?
Addison’s educational experience appears in paragraph 5. Though it is a small portion of the essay, it is her major support for the claim that community college helps students “to begin.” Students may think it’s effective because she establishes herself as an “expert witness” to her own argument, but others may point out that one life story does not make a trend. Students will have their own ideas about community colleges, both positive and negative, and so it might be helpful to ask about their experiences with these schools and those of their friends and family members, and to consider how autobiography in argument both establishes the author as an expert on the topic while also risking the fallacy of generalization.

3. How does Addison make clear that her topic is really important—and that it should matter to readers?

Addison shows that her topic matters when she points out that students at community colleges are able to “dream” in ways that they might not have been able to otherwise. In paragraph 5, she points out that her own experience corroborates the saying, “Enter on empty and leave with a head full of dreams,” and she worries that low-income students in an application essay workshop might not know that community colleges can help them because, as she says in the next-to-last paragraph, “they offer a network of affordable future, of accessible hope, and an option to dream.”
In “Colleges Prepare People for Life,” an op/ed originally published in the *Baltimore Sun*, Freeman Hrabowski argues that high schools and universities should help students choose the school that best fits their needs; then more students would succeed in college and be prepared for leadership roles that “contribut[e] to the public good.” He begins with two opposing “they say” examples, an editorial cartoon arguing that “College is for suckers,” and those who argue that people who attend college succeed economically. “The reality is far more nuanced,” Hrabowski argues, and he points out that both viewpoints have flaws. Instead, he says, students should consider what college would serve them best, and institutions of higher education should state clearly the financial costs. As a longtime president of the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Hrabowski offers examples of how his school tries to help students succeed in college and beyond.

**Teaching Notes**

Because Hrabowski doesn’t explain who Walter Sondheim is, you might want to tell students that he was a civic leader in Baltimore, holding positions such as school board president, director of the Urban League, chairman of the Baltimore Housing Authority, and participant in the development of the Inner Harbor. The fountain Hrabowski describes is on the waterfront in Baltimore.

**Related Essays**

STEPHANIE OWEN AND ISABEL SAWHILL, “Should Everyone Go to College?” [p. 208]
CHARLES MURRAY, “Are Too Many People Going to College?” [p. 234]
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MICHELLE OBAMA, “Bowie State University Commencement Speech” [p. 285]

from Chapter 19:

DAVID LEONHARDT, “Inequality Has Been Going on Forever . . . but That Doesn’t Mean It’s Inevitable” [p. 542]
GARY S. BECKER AND KEVIN M. MURPHY, “The Upside of Income Inequality” [p. 581]

**Joining the Conversation**

1. After reading Freeman Hrabowski’s essay carefully, pick the one sentence that you think expresses its main idea, and be prepared to explain your choice.
Although students who don’t read carefully for the “they say” might choose an idea from paragraphs 1–3, Hrabowski’s main point echoes the essay’s title: “Yes, colleges prepare people for jobs, but more critically, they prepare people for life” (¶4). Other good answers will come from paragraph 3: “When we focus so heavily on monetary inputs and outputs, we ignore the question of what it truly means to be educated, such as contributing to the public good” or “Too often, our current system fails to help students identify the institutions best suited to them—based on their academic preparation, aspirations and resources.”

2. In what way does Hrabowski use a “they say/I say” format to structure his argument? What other points might he have included in his “I say” response?

Hrabowski begins with two opposing points of view for his “they say”: the first is that “College is for suckers” because “students are taking on unmanageable debt and . . . they too often graduate unprepared for the world of work” (¶1), and the second is that college is necessary in order to succeed and earn a lot of money. He responds that both points of view have flaws and advances his own arguments in paragraphs 4 and 5. Students may consider that he might also have addressed students who don’t take on as much debt by attending community college first, or what sorts of courses students might need to take in order to “contribut[e] to the public good.”

3. Hrabowski stresses the role of college in preparing leaders who help their communities. What counterarguments could you present to his emphasis on college as a place to learn how to help others?

Some counterarguments might include naysayers who point out the expense of college and say that in such a high-priced endeavor, a student should be focused on him- or herself. Others may point out that not all jobs are about serving or helping others in a direct way, or that those who don’t go to college can still live a life that involves helping others and advancing the civic good.

4. How do you think Hrabowski might respond to Charles Murray’s argument (on pp. 234–54) that not everyone should go to college?

Hrabowski would likely disagree with Murray, saying that Murray’s argument “treats colleges as monolithic.” As Hrabowski argues, institutions of higher learning include a “diversity of missions” (¶5), and if students have the information available to them to help them make a good decision, they will find the right fit. Towards the end of the essay, Hrabowski argues that “higher education must continue to partner with school systems to prepare more students for college. At stake isn’t just a clearer path to financial stability, but the path to limitless possibilities” (¶10).
5. “Higher education as we know it is about to come to an end.” That’s the opening line of an article by two other college presidents. Go to thesayiblog.com and enter “Give Colleges More Credit” in the search box. How does this article’s argument compare with Hrabowski’s? Which piece do you find more persuasive, and why?

College presidents Barry Glassner and Morton Shapiro present a “they say” argument—that “higher education as we know it is about to come to an end”—and then present an “I say,” that “predictions about the impending demise of classic higher education” have been wrong thus far. At the same time they do wonder how to “best provide students with a balance of the practical skills they’ll need for the world that awaits them and the abstract wisdom that will help them adapt when that world, and they themselves, change.” They have similar concerns as Hrabowski, but a slightly different focus, saying they will be loyal to the professors who are an important part of the educational experience. Students will likely find both essays persuasive because they make similar arguments, though they might note that Glassner and Shapiro do spend more time on the “they say” argument in the beginning, which serves to strengthen their argument.

6. This piece appeared as an op-ed essay in the Baltimore Sun, a newspaper read primarily by people living in that city and its surrounding areas. In what ways did Hrabowski tailor his essay to this particular audience? How might he revise it to address a national audience?

Hrabowski includes many references that Baltimore residents would be aware of, but others would not. For example, he concludes with a description of a fountain describing local leader Walter Sondheim (see “Teaching Notes” above), and he names many organizations and efforts connected to his university system in Maryland, as well as emphasizing the governor and state assembly’s roles. Students might suggest adding additional research about colleges and universities outside Maryland to address a national audience, perhaps examples of some of the diverse missions of those “4,700 colleges and universities” (¶5).
In “Hidden Intellectualism,” Gerald Graff argues that schools should encourage students to write about subjects that interest them. He concedes that passion about a subject does not necessarily mean that students will write well about it, but he argues that if students “write about cars, sports, and fashions in a reflective, analytical way,” they will benefit from the practice. He offers his own experience as an example, pointing out the ways in which analyzing sports set him up to think and argue as an academic. Nonacademic subjects like sports can be “more intellectual than school,” he argues, and they create a sense of community that schools often fail to do.

Teaching Notes
Ask students in what subjects they consider themselves experts. Have they written about those subjects in school? If not, what subjects would they want to use as essay topics, and why?

Related Essays
MIKE ROSE, “Blue-Collar Brilliance” [p. 272]

Joining the Conversation
1. Gerald Graff begins his essay with the view that we generally associate “book smarts” with intellectualism and “street smarts” with anti-intellectualism. Graff then provides an extended example from his early life to counter this viewpoint. What do you think of his argument that boyhood conversations about sports provided a solid foundation for his later intellectual life? What support does he provide, and how persuasive is it?

Students are likely to accept Graff’s arguments regarding how analyzing and debating about sports when he was young laid the groundwork for his intellectual life as an adult. When he writes in paragraph 10 specifically about what he later realized he was learning, the evidence of his own understanding seems convincing. His example of himself can hardly help but be persuasive, assuming one accepts his claim that he was not much of a student in high school. He clearly went on to become a scholar, so something must account for his intellectual development, and there is little reason to distrust his own appraisal.

2. Graff argues in paragraph 13 that the intellectual world is much like the world of team sports, with “rival texts . . ., rival theories . . ., and elaborate team competitions.” Can you think of any examples from your own experience that support this assertion?
In what ways do you think “the real intellectual world” is different from the world of
team sports?

If students have trouble responding to this first question, you need do no more
than point out the rivalries represented by the readings in this chapter or any of the
readings chapters in this text. Any time they do research for college, they will encounter
competing viewpoints. At the same time, students will likely feel that there are
significant differences between the world of team sports and the intellectual world.
Most obviously, a career in team sports is generally over at a relatively young age,
while the life of the mind expands indefinitely. Moreover, the life of the mind is open
to just about anyone.

3. Imagine a conversation between Graff and Mike Rose (pp. 272–84) on the intel-
lectual skills people can develop outside the realm of formal education and the benefits
of these skills.

Although Mike Rose focuses on the kinds of intelligences people display outside
(rather than inside) of academia, he would agree with Graff that street smarts are
important. Graff would nod in agreement with Rose’s statement that “When we
devolve the full range of everyday cognition, we offer limited educational opportunities
and fail to make fresh and meaningful instructional connections among disparate
kinds of skill and knowledge” (¶28). The authors might brainstorm about ways to
bring blue-collar workers’ knowledge into the classroom.

4. So what? Who cares? Graff does not answer these questions explicitly. Do it for
him: write a brief paragraph saying why his argument matters, and for whom.

Possible paragraph: Graff’s argument matters because entering students often
find it difficult to become part of the intellectual life of college, and it matters if one
is truly to benefit from formal education. Such students start off either bored or
intimidated by academic texts, but at the same time they deserve a chance to develop
the intellectual skills that they will need in college and later in their careers. Instructors
need to find ways of doing this, and Graff believes his model is one such possibility.
In this essay, Mike Rose profiles his mother Rosie and his uncle Joe, who serve as examples of his argument that those without formal education have important kinds of intelligence. He points out that although we assume less time in school means that a person is less intelligent, those who work in manual labor use critical thinking, math, reading, and writing skills. These workers also acquire a social intelligence for working with others to solve problems, and their “education” happens as they learn daily on the job. Rose argues that we should be aware of the many kinds of intelligence necessary to be a skilled worker and to make sure we don’t offer “limited educational opportunities” (¶28) to them.

Teaching Notes

This essay does not mention higher education in much depth, despite the fact that Rose teaches at a large public university. Ask students how this essay relates to some of the others in the chapter, or to extend Rose’s argument: what would he say about the relevance of college to the blue-collar workers he describes?

Ask students to find examples of Rose’s appeal to readers’ emotions (especially in the descriptions of his mother and uncle); how do they react to the use of pathos?

Related Essays

LIZ ADDISON, “Two Years Are Better than Four” [p. 255]
CHARLES MURRAY, “Are Too Many People Going to College?” [p. 234]
GERALD GRAFF, “Hidden Intellectualism” [p. 264]

Joining the Conversation

1. This essay begins with a fairly detailed description of Mike Rose’s mother at her work as a waitress in the 1950s, when he was a child. How is this description related to his argument? Is it an effective opening? Why or why not?

   The description of Rosie, the waitress, is the first example, an extended example, of a blue-collar worker requiring specific kinds of intelligence to do her job well. It is a very detailed example of the argument Rose later makes that blue-collar workers employ intelligence on the job. Students may think it’s effective because it is a story rich in detail that draws them in, but some may argue against the pathos of introducing his hardworking mother in order to connect to readers emotionally.
2. How would you summarize Rose’s overall argument? What evidence does he offer as support? How convincing is his argument?

Rose argues that intelligence should not be associated solely with formal education, as he says in paragraph 9. Instead we should challenge our understanding of the relationship between mind and body and acknowledge the ways in which blue-collar workers use various kinds of intelligence on the job. He supports this argument with numerous examples of blue-collar jobs that require thinking, reading, and interpreting, and he also notes in paragraph 15 that he has studied “the cognitive demands of a range of blue-collar and service jobs,” establishing himself as an expert on the topic. Students’ opinions of the argument will vary.

3. Where does Rose mention differing views, and what is his reason for bringing them up? What are these other views, and who holds them?

Rose mentions opposing views in paragraph 9 when he details “assumptions” about the lower intelligence levels of blue-collar workers. He points out how Revolutionary-era thinkers saw mechanics as “illiterate and therefore incapable of participating in government” and says that he has overheard management call workers “dummies.” In paragraph 27, he acknowledges that some of the uses of writing that occur in blue-collar work “are abbreviated, routine, and repetitive, and they infrequently require interpretation or analysis.” In each case, the opposing views help establish his own argument. The entire essay is predicated on the “they say” argument that blue-collar workers are not intelligent, and he points out the ways in which readers may assume that he is giving too much credit to the reading and writing tasks of blue-collar jobs. He rarely assigns these points of view to particular groups of people, though, implying that they are pervasive in our culture. He does, however, single out managers in paragraph 9. Ask students who might be most likely to denigrate the intellectual levels of those who do physical work or to think that a college education equals intelligence.

4. How do you think Rose would respond to Charles Murray’s argument (pp. 234–54) that many students lack the intellectual potential to succeed in college?

The two authors would likely agree that different kinds of intelligence are valuable, since Murray spent some time analyzing possible futures for a student who would succeed as an electrician. Indeed both authors value blue-collar work. Rose would likely challenge Murray’s definition of intellectual potential, though, as he might argue that Murray fails to consider some skills students may have; as he says in paragraph 28: “when we devalue the full range of everyday cognition, we offer limited educational opportunities and fail to make fresh and meaningful instructional connections among disparate kinds of skill and knowledge.” Rose might say that despite Murray’s concerns about class conflict in our society, he may be reinforcing “social separations” by assuming such students will not succeed.
**Bowie State University Commencement Speech**  [p. 285]

**MICHELLE OBAMA**

In this commencement address from May 2013, First Lady Michelle Obama uses the history of Bowie State University, founded in 1865, to argue that students need to have a “relentless focus on getting an education in the face of obstacles” (¶24). She describes the original days of the school in an African Baptist church and its commitment to the education of African American teachers, and she contrasts the struggles of those early students with apathetic “young people [who] just can’t be bothered” (¶18) with obtaining an education. She praises particular students in the graduating class who overcame challenges and encourages the entire audience to take action in their community to improve schools. In her view, education means “economic independence” and “political empowerment” (¶13), just as it did for the original Bowie State students.

**Teaching Notes**

Ask students what they would expect a commencement address to include, and have them identify key elements of that genre in Michelle Obama’s speech.

**Related Essays**

*STEPHANIE OWEN AND ISABEL SAWHILL, “Should Everyone Go to College?”*  [p. 208]

*SANFORD UNGAR, “The New Liberal Arts”*  [p. 226]

*CHARLES MURRAY, “Are Too Many People Going to College?”*  [p. 234]

*FREEMAN HRABOWSKI, “Colleges Prepare People for Life”*  [p. 259]

from Chapter 19:

*DAVID LEONHARDT, “Inequality Has Been Going on Forever . . . but That Doesn’t Mean It’s Inevitable”*  [p. 542]

*GARY S. BECKER AND KEVIN M. MURPHY, “The Upside of Income Inequality”*  [p. 581]

**Joining the Conversation**

1. One purpose of this speech was to celebrate the achievements of the graduates. But at the same time, Michelle Obama is making an argument about some things she hopes those graduates will do. What’s her main point and how does she support that point?

   Obama’s main argument appears in paragraph 24: “It is that kind of unwavering determination—that relentless focus on getting an education in the face of obstacles—that’s what we need to reclaim, as a community and as a nation.” She supports that point by describing the challenges to education for both the first Bowie State University
students and some members of the 2013 graduating class, and she says that everyone should fight for education, by talking to anyone “not taking their education seriously” (¶26), getting involved with local schools, and limiting children’s exposure to media and entertainment.

2. Throughout her address, Obama explains why her argument matters, but she does not, as this book advises, start with what others are saying and then introduce her own ideas as a response. What do you think her “they say” would be?

   Obama expresses implied “they say” statements later in the speech; she notes that some young people don’t prioritize education and don’t see its importance (¶18) and that others think that “a black child with a book is trying to act white” (¶29). Students might bring up other “they say” points, such as that higher education isn’t important for everyone, that the cost of education is insurmountable for some, or that the system is stacked against some students at a young age in a way that can’t be overcome.

3. Obama addresses much of the speech to the graduates and their families. Find some specific examples of her references to this audience, and discuss the ways in which she tries to make a connection with them.

   Obama briefly addresses the audience directly in paragraph 4 and 5, but in paragraphs 21–23, she mentions the backgrounds of two particular graduates, a very explicit connection. Students who pay attention to Bowie State University’s identity as a historically black college will notice that Obama’s use of history appeals to the common culture of the largely African American audience, and she includes statistics (¶19) that do so as well. Paragraphs 20 and 25–30 are a call to action for the graduating class and their families, and in paragraph 34, Obama sympathizes with the sacrifices the families made.

4. Obama refers specifically to college president Freeman Hrabowski in paragraph 3 of her speech. What parallels, if any, can you find between her speech and Hrabowski’s op-ed (pp. 259–63)?

   While Obama’s speech draws more attention to Bowie State University’s mission as a historically black institution, both argue that those who are committed to getting a good education can contribute to society and enrich the public good. Both also state that the community serves to support those individuals who desire a good education.
In “Better than Human: Why Robots Will—and Must—Take Our Jobs,” Kevin Kelly argues that advances in automation, including cognitive tasks done by computers, will help us. Although some may worry that robots will take jobs away from humans (an implicit “they say” throughout the essay), Kelly argues that “we aren’t giving ‘good jobs’ to robots. Most of the time we are giving them jobs we could never do. Without them, these jobs would remain undone” (¶19). To prove his point, he first points out that though the industrial revolution eliminated some farm workers’ jobs, it “created hundreds of millions of jobs in entirely new fields” (¶1). We are now in a new wave of automation, according to Kelly, because machines are smarter, easy for anyone to program, and cheap. He uses a figure demonstrating that there will be “jobs humans can do but robots can do even better” (¶15), “jobs that humans can’t do but robots can” (¶17), and “new jobs created by automation” (¶20). In discussion of the final quadrant, “the jobs that only humans can do—at first” (¶25), Kelly argues that having robots take care of particular tasks lets us ask “What are humans for?” (¶26); in his view, we will be free to imagine new possibilities for the human race.

Teaching Notes
Have students visit Kevin Kelly’s website, www.kk.org/cooltools, and ask them to consider the ways in which his approach to tools echoes his argument in this essay.

Related Essays
Nicholas Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” [p. 313]
Brooke Gladstone and Josh Neufeld, “The Influencing Machines” [p. 330]

Joining the Conversation
1. Kevin Kelly argues that machines will eventually take over many of the jobs that we now perform. This may seem dire, yet he doesn’t appear at all worried. To the contrary, in fact. Why not? Find statements in the article that explain his attitude.
Kelly is optimistic about the future of our work lives if machines take over current jobs. He thinks that “our new work will become something we can hardly imagine” (¶13), and he points out that we benefit from robots’ precision and capabilities, noting that they do some things better than humans. “Most of the time we are giving them jobs we could never do. Without them, these jobs would remain undone” (¶19), Kelly says. Later in the essay, he argues that we will be “empowered to dream up yet more answers to the question ‘What should we do?’” (¶26), spurring unimagined innovation.

2. This article appeared in Wired, a magazine for people who know and care about digital technology. How is the article geared toward a pro-technology audience? How might Kelly have presented his argument for a readership that was less enthusiastic about technology?

Kelly addresses the reader directly in paragraph 2, when he says, “Yes, dear reader, even you will have your job taken away by machines.” Since the average reader of Wired is likely a white-collar worker, they might be surprised by his argument. The examples of technology Kelly uses would also be intriguing to the Wired audience, including Baxter, an affordable workbot; the autopilot on a plane; tax-preparation software; and the computer chip. Wired readers visit the site and read the magazine in order to imagine the possibilities of the future, and they would be drawn to Kelly’s statement that “it is a safe bet that the highest-earning professions in the year 2050 will depend on automations and machines that have not been invented yet” (¶24). If Kelly were writing for an audience less enthusiastic about technology, he would instead have to choose more examples focusing on how humans will benefit from this shift in the use of machines, perhaps expanding his point on how we would be able to contemplate the meaning of life and pointing out the ways in which robots’ work could lead to more comfortable lives for humans.

3. Though he acknowledges that some of his ideas are “hard to believe,” Kelly does not begin by saying explicitly what other ideas or assumptions he’s responding to. How does he begin, and how does it set the stage for his argument?

Kelly has an implicit “they say” in a few places in the essay, including that robots should look like humans (¶7) and that we might be unemployed if robots take our jobs. However, he begins by presenting a scary scenario: seven out of 10 workers let go. Kelly then points out that that scenario happened “in slow motion” during the industrial revolution, but that automation led to many new jobs with previously unimagined tasks. He sets up that historical example to argue that a similar “second wave of automation” would also lead to additional—but different—jobs.
4. Nicholas Carr (pp. 312–29) is less optimistic than Kelly about the future impact of technology. Who do you find more persuasive, and why?

Carr notes that the “Internet is a machine designed for the efficient and automated collection, transmission, and manipulation of information, and its legions of programmers are intent on finding the ‘one best method’—the perfect algorithm—to carry out every mental movement of what we’ve come to describe as ‘knowledge work’” (¶23). This sentiment echoes statements in Kelly’s essay, but Carr is worried about the Internet taking over too much knowledge work because our own ability to think deeply diminishes as a result. Students’ opinions on who is more persuasive will vary, but those intrigued by the possibilities of technology or those who desire to outsource aspects of their thinking might favor Kelly’s argument.
In “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” Nicholas Carr argues that the Internet affects our cognitive capacities, diminishing our ability to concentrate and to learn. He begins with an allusion to the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* to explain his own recent inability to concentrate for long periods of time, which he blames on the amount of time he uses the web. Carr acknowledges the advantages of the internet, including the vast amounts of available information, but he gives anecdotes from others who struggle to pay attention and evidence from a study of online research habits to demonstrate that we can’t read as deeply as we once did. Later, Carr also offers historical parallels, including Nietzsche’s use of a typewriter, as he explains the malleability of our brains, and he points out that news media have adopted the distractions of the internet, too. Although Carr notes that he might just be a “worrywart” (¶30), echoing the worries of Plato and others about the ways in which reading and writing have changed in the past, he is concerned that the loss of “deep reading” (¶32) means the loss of the ability to think deeply.

**Teaching Notes**

Before assigning the essay, show students the relevant section of the movie *2001: A Space Odyssey* and have them freewrite about what it makes them think or feel.

**Related Essays**


BROOKE GLADSTONE AND JOSH NEUFELD, “The Influencing Machines” [p. 330]

CLIVE THOMPSON, “Smarter Than You Think” [p. 340]

**Joining the Conversation**

1. “Is Google making us stupid?” How does Nicholas Carr answer this question, and what evidence does he provide to support his answer?

Carr thinks that, yes, Google and the rest of the internet are making us stupid. He provides personal evidence for his assertion in the first few paragraphs as he discusses his inability to concentrate for long periods of time, and he also uses anecdotes from other bloggers about their similar challenges. In addition to first-hand experience, Carr includes a research study by scholars from University College London about visitors’ reading habits on two research sites, and he quotes Maryanne Wolf, a developmental psychologist, and James Olds, a professor of neuroscience.
2. What possible objections to his own position does Carr introduce—and why do you think he does so? How effectively does he counter these objections?

Carr incorporates objections to his position in a few places. In paragraph four, he notes that the internet offers “immediate access to . . . an incredibly rich store of information,” and he quotes Clive Thompson, another author in this chapter. Students who have read Chapter 6 carefully will notice that he makes a concession but stands his ground, noting that “the boon comes at a price” (¶4).

Later, Carr notes that we once thought that the brain was “largely fixed by the time we reached adulthood” (¶13), and he uses the work of a neuroscientist to respond to this assumption.

Towards the end of the essay, Carr describes the motivations of Google, whose founders hope to “turn their search engine into an artificial intelligence, a HAL-like machine that might be connected directly to our brains” (¶26). The problem with this approach, Carr says, is that “it suggests a belief that intelligence is the output of a mechanical process, a series of discrete steps that can be isolated, measured, and optimized,” leaving no room for “the fuzziness of contemplation” (¶28).

He also points out that some might say he’s just a worrywart, and he gives two historical examples, Plato and Hieronimo Squarciafico, to demonstrate that his concerns echo theirs. His response to this naysayer is that “the Net isn’t the alphabet” (¶32) and that sacrificing contemplation means sacrificing part of our culture.

3. Carr begins this essay by quoting an exchange between HAL and Dave, a supercomputer and astronaut in the film 2001: A Space Odyssey—and concludes by reflecting on that scene. What happens to HAL and Dave, and how does it support his argument?

In the beginning of the essay, Carr describes the scene in which Dave is unplugging HAL’s memory circuits as a metaphor to explain how Carr himself feels like part of his cognition has been disengaged. In the final paragraph, though, he notes that HAL acts more emotionally than “the human figures in the film, who go about their business with an almost robotic efficiency.” He uses this example to demonstrate that if we rely on computers to do most of our thinking, “it is our own intelligence that flattens into artificial intelligence.”

4. How does Carr use transitions to connect the parts of his text and to help readers follow his train of thought? (See Chapter 8 to help you think about how they help develop an argument.)

Students may notice that Carr doesn’t use the transition words listed in Chapter 8 to transition between paragraphs or sections. Instead, he uses key terms or phrases to transition. For example, paragraph 19 begins “The Net’s influence doesn’t end at
the edges of a computer screen, either,” before Carr explains how it’s impacted news media. In paragraph 24, Carr uses a reference to Frederick Winslow Taylor to transition to a section on Google. Students who read Chapter 8 may remember (about the Martin Luther King Jr. excerpt) that “these key terms help build a sense of momentum in the paragraph and bind it together.”

5. In his essay on pp. 340–60, Clive Thompson reaches a different conclusion than Carr does, saying that “At their best, today’s digital tools help us see more, retain more, communicate more. At their worst, they leave us prey to the manipulation of the toolmakers. But on balance . . . what is happening is deeply positive.” Write a paragraph or two discussing how Carr might respond. What would he agree with, and what would he disagree with?

Carr would agree that digital tools “leave us prey to the manipulation of the toolmakers,” but he would disagree that they help us retain more or that they are positive on the whole.
In a chapter from this graphic book illustrated by Josh Neufeld, Brooke Gladstone argues that we pay attention to those who think like us and that the internet intensifies these tendencies. She worries that future digital technology will also “diminish” our perspective. She quotes Nicholas Carr’s essay in this chapter to demonstrate that technological changes affect our brains, but she says she’s not worried about these changes and offers some examples from “the history of communications” to demonstrate that technologies we consider old and harmless—like television, radio, the “printed word,” and writing—were once seen as threatening. She concludes with the work of Douglas Adams, author of The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy, who argues that whether we consider technology “new” or “unnatural” depends on our age when it is introduced.

Teaching Notes
Ask students how many of them have read graphic texts—comic books, graphic novels, cartoons, and so on—and discuss the elements of the genre.

Related Essays
Nicholas Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” [p. 313]
Clive Thompson, “Smarter Than You Think” [p. 340]

Joining the Conversation
1. What is Brooke Gladstone and Josh Neufeld’s argument, and how do they support their position?

Gladstone and Neufeld argue that we listen to only those who think like us and that the internet magnifies this “echo chamber.” They support this position by defining relevant terms like “homophily” and “incestuous amplification,” and by quoting Cass Sunstein, who researched how these tendencies can lead to more extreme viewpoints. However, Gladstone and Neufeld also argue that throughout history, various kinds of communication were seen as dangerous technologies that would “destroy our concentration, memory, communities, our mental and physical health.” They offer numerous examples of past statements echoing Nicholas Carr’s concerns, including those against television, radio, reading books, and writing, and she takes as a touchstone Douglas Adams’ views on technology.
2. What “they say” has motivated her argument? How do you know?

The “they say” for the second half of her argument is Nicholas Carr, particularly his essay, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” Gladstone quotes Carr, restates his point of view, and then asks, “Does that creep you out?” In the next frame, she says, “Actually, I’m not creeped out.”

3. Gladstone quotes or paraphrases a number of writers across time. Some support her position and some do not, but she is very much in conversation with many thinkers on the subject of technology. Choose four and explain what they contribute to her argument.

Gladstone cites Cass Sunstein to explain the “so what?” factor of her argument, that we set up our internet experience so that we hear the opinions of those with whom we agree. She quotes Nicholas Carr extensively to set up a “they say” for the second half of her text, that technology affects our brains. Many of the others—Newton N. Minow, an issue of Gramaphone, Neil Postman, The Sanitarian, Conrad Gesner, Barnaby Rich, Tibor Braun, and Plato—demonstrate her argument that for centuries we’ve had concerns about technology and its effects on our thinking, but we’ve turned out all right. She quotes Douglas Adams at the end of this excerpt to demonstrate that our age determines whether we see technology as normal, new and exciting, or “against the natural order of things.”

4. See the “hint” Gladstone adds on p. 332. How does it function as metacommentary? (See Chapter 10 for a reminder about how writers use metacommentary.)

The hint says that “when you hear a group of guys called ‘Masters of the Universe,’ run!” It accompanies a graphic that shows financial analysts saying that they don’t need to worry about the real estate bubble. Students who read Chapter 10 will know that this metacommentary helps to clarify that the analysts’ isolation makes their conclusions dangerous. The image itself establishes a “so what” factor: not having access to points of view with which we disagree can lead to disastrous consequences like the stock market crash and recession of 2008.
In “Smarter than You Think,” Clive Thompson argues that humans work with computers on many tasks, which makes us “radically smarter than we’d be on our own” (¶20). He begins with an extended example of the game of chess, noting that now some players are stronger with the help of computers, a collaboration he calls “centaurs.” Thompson says that we’ve “outsourced bits of cognition” (¶21) throughout the history of education, and he gives as evidence his own experience working on this text, demonstrating how various digital tools helped him develop the chapter. He also points out that the emergence of print culture echoes our technologies today: “each time we’re faced with bewildering new thinking tools, we panic—then quickly set about deducing how they can be used to help us work, meditate, and create” (¶30). Thompson introduces a naysayer in the person of Nicholas Carr and others interested in brain chemistry, but notes that “serious neuroscientists agree that we don’t really know how our brains are wired to begin with” (¶35). His final example, also about chess, leads to his concluding point: we can rely too much on technology and become lazy, but if we value learning and take it seriously, computers can only enhance our intellect.

Teaching Notes

Students will likely be unfamiliar with Marshall McLuhan, mentioned in paragraph 23. McLuhan is best known for the phrase “the medium is the message,” from his 1964 book, Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man, in which he examines the relationship between humans and technology.

Related Essays

KEVIN KELLY, “Better than Human” [p. 299]
NICHOLAS CARR, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” [p. 313]
BROOKE GLADSTONE AND JOSH NEUFELD, “The Influencing Machines” [p. 330]
CLIVE THOMPSON, “Smarter than You Think” [p. 340]

Joining the Conversation

1. Clive Thompson lists three shifts—infinite memory, dot connecting, and explosive publishing—that he believes have strongly affected our cognition. What exactly does he mean by these three shifts, and in what ways does he think they have changed our ways of thinking?
The first concept, infinite memory, describes the ways in which our electronic devices can “routinely record more information than any tool before them” (¶24), extending our memory of our own lives and thoughts. Dot connecting means that “today’s tools make it easier for us to find connections—between ideas, pictures, people, bits of news—that were previously invisible” (¶24), and explosive publishing describes the wide variety of ways in which we communicate today, everything from Wikipedia to discussion threads on Instagram. He thinks that tools like these “upend our mental habits in ways we never expected and often don’t apprehend even as they take hold” (¶25).

2. Thompson starts paragraph 20 by saying “Our tools are everywhere, linked with our minds, working in tandem.” What do you think? Does his statement reflect your own experience with technology?

Students will likely agree with this statement if they have smartphones or use computers regularly. Those who have less access to technologies like these might say that they live their lives differently than the way Thompson describes or might even raise the questions of access and class.

3. In paragraphs 33–35, Thompson cites Nicholas Carr, whose views about technology differ from his. How does he respond to Carr—and how does acknowledging views he disagrees with help support his own position?

Thompson mentions Carr as part of his discussion about the tendency towards “obsess[ion] with our brain chemistry” (¶33). He reiterates the argument Carr makes in “Is Google Making Us Stupid,” that the internet has diminished his ability to think deeply. Thompson concedes that “many of these fears are warranted” (¶34), and he agrees that careful, sustained attention to tasks is important. But he counters that the science of brain study is underdeveloped at this point in time. He points out that Carr cites a single study, and notes two other studies to demonstrate that the field has much room to grow. Students familiar with Chapter 6 may say that including the opposite point of view enhances Thompson’s credibility as an expert on the conversation and shows his efforts to treat readers with respect.

4. So what? Has Thompson convinced you that his topic matters? If so, how and where does he do so?

Thompson thinks that this shift in thinking aided by the internet and other digital tools matters because it enables us to participate in public culture. “On a social level, this expands our ability to understand the people we care about,” he says. “On a civic level, it helps dispel traditional political problems like ‘pluralistic ignorance,’ catalyzing political action, as in the Arab Spring” (¶28). Some students will be convinced by this reasoning; others may feel like chess tournaments and the activities of technology writers don’t apply to their experiences.
In “Does Texting Affect Writing?” Michaela Cullington presents different viewpoints on whether texting affects writing, in addition to her own field research. She concludes that texting does not significantly affect student writing. Beginning with a sort of literature review, Cullington notes that teachers and professors blame the weaknesses of their student writing—including spelling, punctuation, and trouble with expressing emotions—on texting. She also presents research on those who think texting helps students become better writers and communicators. In her own research, Cullington surveyed seven students, interviewed two high-school teachers, and analyzed student research papers to see if texting affected student writing beyond the anecdotal experience. She found that “students do not believe textspeak is appropriate in formal writing assignments” (¶17), and she offers additional research to back up her observations, as well as her own personal experience. She acknowledges that some students may use “textspeak” in “informal, ‘warm-up’ writing” (¶19), but she found no evidence of it in final drafts.

Teaching Notes
Present students with a text message, a Tweet, a haiku, and an aphorism, and have them compare and contrast these genres.

Related Essays
Sherry Turkle, “No Need to Call” [p. 373]

Joining the Conversation
1. Michaela Cullington makes clear in her first paragraph what viewpoint she’s responding to. What is this view (her “they say”), and what is her view (her “I say”)?

   Cullington’s “they say” is twofold: some argue that the language of text messages negatively affects student writers; another point of view is that texting has “a positive effect on writing” (¶3). She disagrees with both views, arguing that texting does not significantly impact student writing, and she uses field research—including surveys of students, interviews of teachers, and analysis of writing samples—as well as secondary research to support her argument. That secondary research includes the work of English and linguistics professor Dennis Baron (¶19), a university study published in the New England Reading Association Journal, and other sources. She also includes her own personal experience as evidence.
2. Cullington acknowledges the views of quite a few naysayers, including teachers who believe that texting has a negative effect on their students’ writing. How—and where in her essay—does she respond to this criticism? Is her response persuasive—and if not, why not?

Cullington responds to the naysayers by pointing out that “their evidence is limited, based on just a few personal experiences rather than on a significant amount of research” (¶7). She offers expert quotes to demonstrate that many other teachers feel that texting can actually help students communicate, and she does her own research. Many students may find this response persuasive, but others may note that she too uses personal anecdotes as evidence and that her sample for the survey of students is small, as she herself admits.

3. What kinds of sources does Cullington cite, and how does she incorporate their ideas in her essay? Look at paragraph 18, for instance: how well does she introduce and explain Dennis Baron’s ideas? (See pp. 44–48 on framing quotations.)

Cullington cites a variety of sources, including information from surveys and interviews. She also includes books, newspapers, journal articles, and information from the National Education Association website. In paragraph 18, Cullington first explains who Baron is to establish his expertise on the issue; she also provides context for his quote. Thus, she frames the quotation well before it. Although she ends the paragraph on the quote, her explanation of it begins in the next paragraph, as she addresses how her survey results support what Baron said. Students may notice that she uses the “quotation sandwich” described in Chapter 3.

4. Cullington focuses on how texting affects writing, whereas Sherry Turkle is concerned with the way it affects communication more broadly (pp. 373–92). How do you think Cullington would respond to Turkle’s concerns?

Cullington would likely agree with Audrey and the other people Turkle interviews. Cullington notes in her introduction that texting “allows quick messages to be sent without people having to commit to a telephone conversation. A person is able to say what is needed, and the other person will receive the information and respond when it’s convenient to do so” (¶2). She says that she is a “frequent texter” (¶21) and uses the technology to communicate with friends both close and far away. Still, she wouldn’t be worried about texting serving to isolate people from each other.
In “No Need to Call,” Sherry Turkle argues that both teenagers and adults use text messaging as an alternative to phone calls in ways that could leave them isolated. She interviews teens who text to think through what they want to say, to craft an identity, and to find “an alternative to processing emotions in real time” (¶30). Busy adults text in order to delay communication to a convenient time and in order to avoid intruding in others’ lives. The effect of all this texting, Turkle says, is that we remove the voices of our friends and family from our lives, and it becomes a circular process: “It is poignant that people’s thoughts turn to technology when they imagine ways to deal with stresses that they see as having been brought on by technology” (¶22).

Teaching Notes
Turkle has given two TED talks on this subject, if you’d like to show the students a video of her explaining these or similar views.

Related Essays
MICHAELA CULLINGTON, “Does Texting Affect Writing?”  [p. 361]

Joining the Conversation
1. Sherry Turkle was once optimistic about the potential for technology to improve human lives but now takes a more complex view. What does she mean here by the title “No Need to Call”? What pitfalls does she see in our increasing reluctance to talk on the phone or face-to-face?

   Turkle notes that many people feel like there’s no need to call when a text message will do instead. Although she notes that some of her interviewees feel a sense of control when they text message, she worries that we increase our isolation from others when we don’t hear their voices. Teens in particular “keep themselves at a distance from their feelings. They keep themselves from people who could help” (¶30).

2. This reading consists mainly of stories about how people communicate on social media, on the phone, and face to face. Summarize the story about Audrey (pp. 376–81) in one paragraph.

   Audrey is a teen from a blended family who shuttles back and forth between her parents’ houses and sees her parents, especially her mother, use their electronic devices to connect with others rather than her. Audrey prefers text messaging because
she has control over the pacing of the conversation and can edit what she wants to say. She can avoid awkward encounters, especially at the ends of conversations, and work to craft herself as a different person through texting and an online persona.

3. According to Turkle, we “hide as much as [we] show” in text messages and email, presenting ourselves “as [we] wish to be ‘seen’” (¶38). Is this so different from what we do in most of our writing? How do you present yourself in your academic writing, and how does that presentation differ from what you do in text messages or email?

Students who think carefully about the question will realize that they create a persona or voice for the many genres they write in, including academic essays. Though it’s a very different voice than the one they use for texts or emails, in academic writing, students think about their audience and purpose, in many cases presenting themselves as they think a teacher wants them to be. Other students may also note that academic writing is about communicating information, just as in a text message or email. Students will likely acknowledge that knowing in advance who the audience of their writing is will affect how and what they write.

4. Is digital communication good or bad—or both? Read Chapter 13, which summarizes both sides of that discussion. Which side (or sides) do you come down on? Where do you think Turkle stands?

Chapter 13 notes that “our purpose . . . is not to try to settle these debates, but to invite you to think about how digital technologies affect your work as a reader and writer.” Students will have varied reactions to the arguments there, but many will say that digital communication gives them more control, as Audrey in this text does. Others will note that it’s sad when they’re with other people but everyone is paying attention to a screen instead of each other. Even those who feel a level of control with technology may agree with Chapter 13’s points about the lower quality of online conversations. Turkle feels that while texting does help us relieve particular stresses, some of which stem from technology itself, it may disconnect us further from those around us, even as it makes it harder for us to have “the space to think our own thoughts” (¶23).
In “I Had a Nice Time with You Tonight. On the App,” Jenna Wortham argues that online messaging services help us feel closer to those we can’t see on a daily basis. She opens with an anecdote about interacting with her boyfriend “despite living more than 3,000 miles apart” (¶2), and she notes that online communication feels like “casual conversation” (¶5). Though she says “it can be hard to juggle all the various ways to communicate” (¶6), she thinks the services are well worth it and profiles a few apps designed specifically for couples. Wortham describes the perspective of Sherry Turkle, a naysayer who worries that online interactions diminish our ability to communicate effectively in person, but she responds to that objection, noting that “the pervasiveness of technology in my life has heightened my desire for actual one-on-one meetings” (¶16). As Wortham concludes, using digital tools to communicate actually brings us closer to one another.

Teaching Notes
Survey students to see what applications they use most often to communicate, and why they use them. Perhaps even have some demonstrate particular methods of communication and analyze their advantages and limitations.

Have students read and respond to the Pew Research Center report mentioned in paragraph 19, “Couples, the Internet, and Social Media,” by Amanda Lenhart and Maeve Duggan.

Related Essays
MICHAELA CULLINGTON, “Does Texting Affect Writing?” [p. 361]
SHERRY TURKLE, “No Need to Call” [p. 373]

Joining the Conversation
1. How would you summarize Jenna Wortham’s attitude about using apps to communicate with her boyfriend and others? What benefits does she see, and what limitations?

Wortham feels positively about using apps to communicate. Doing so causes her to feel “physically close” (¶4) to those who are far away, and the features of messaging make it feel “more like the kind of casual conversation you might have over a meal” (¶5). She notes that “it can be hard to juggle all the various ways to communicate” (¶6) as a limitation and admits that “it’s no substitute for the real
thing” (¶17) of communication in person, but she thinks that communicating through apps actually increases her desire to see people in person.

2. Wortham begins her piece with a short narrative about “a lazy afternoon” with her boyfriend. Why is this an effective way to begin this essay? How else might it have begun?

The introductory method surprises the reader because s/he may not expect at first that the lazy afternoon Wortham describes happens between two people “more than 3,000 miles apart” (¶2). The twist works against the reader’s initial expectations, and a personal anecdote may draw them in as well. Students may note that Wortham could have started by summarizing a “they say” argument, perhaps Sherry Turkle, who appears later in the essay as a naysayer.

3. So what? Who cares? Where in this piece does Wortham explain why her argument matters? Has she persuaded you—and if not, why not?

Wortham explains that “adding the Internet to the mix can strengthen a relationship over all” (¶18), establishing that her argument matters because it improves our relationships. Students will likely be persuaded by this argument, though some may say that their own experiences go against her argument and that she could have acknowledged additional naysayers.

4. Sherry Turkle writes (pp. 373–92) that young women often “prefer to deal with strong feelings from the safe haven of the Net” and that it provides “an alternative to processing emotions in real time.” What do you think Wortham would say to that?

Wortham would agree with those statements and not see them as a problem, though Turkle has concerns about them. Wortham notes that video chat services “can be awkward” (¶2), and she says that “I’ve had some of my most emotionally intimate and honest conversations with friends and romantic partners on mobile devices” (¶21). She would agree that interacting in person is best, but online communication methods “come awfully close in a pinch” (¶21).
In “Small Change: Why the Revolution Will Not Be Tweeted,” Malcolm Gladwell responds to arguments that social media can facilitate revolution and spur other forms of social activism. He points out that revolutions in Iran and Moldova were not driven by Twitter and Facebook, though it may have seemed so at the time, and he argues that social media drives “weak-tie” rather than “strong-tie” activism. “Weak-tie” activists do not know most of the participants in a movement and take part only if there is little risk involved. “Strong-tie” activists, like those in the 1960s civil rights movement, have close friends or family who are intimately involved with the cause, and they participate even in high-risk situations. Gladwell also argues that effective activism requires a hierarchy rather than a laterally organized social network such as a Facebook group, and he concludes that “a networked, weak-tie world” participates in small, low-risk causes rather than larger, high-risk causes.

Teaching Notes
In paragraph 19, Gladwell details three Facebook groups, analyzing their membership totals versus their average donations. Ask students to update his statistics or analyze another set of groups on Facebook to see if his argument about strong-tie and weak-tie activism holds true.

Related Essays
Clive Thompson, “Smarter Than You Think” [p. 340]
Sherry Turkle, “No Need to Call” [p. 373]

Joining the Conversation
1. What claims about the power of social media to create large-scale social change is Malcolm Gladwell responding to? What does he say, and where in his text does he bring up the views he disagrees with?

Gladwell discusses the arguments promoting social media as a key component in social activism starting in paragraph 7. He says, “The new tools of social media have reinvented social activism. With Facebook and Twitter and the like, the traditional relationship between political authority and popular will has been upended, making it easier for the powerless to collaborate, coordinate, and give a voice to their concerns.” He discusses revolutions in Moldova and Iran and quotes a former senior State Department official who believes social media can be used to fight terrorism. He
brings up these opposing views (his “they say”) after an extended description of the Woolworth’s lunch counter sit-ins. He begins to refute these views in paragraph 8.

2. What is Gladwell’s view of the relationship between social media and social change? What are the main arguments he presents to support his position? How does his discussion of the Woolworth’s lunch counter sit-in of 1960, which he threads through his article, fit into his argument?

Gladwell believes that social media alone cannot trigger or facilitate large-scale social change, especially high-risk, sweeping social movements. He examines the differences between “strong-tie” and “weak-tie” activism (see question 3) and argues that successful large-scale revolutions require hierarchical organization, not lateral networks. He uses the lunch counter sit-ins as an example to support his argument that revolution is possible without social media, but also to show that the kinds of connections activists need and the level of organization required contrast sharply with the abilities of social media.

3. How does Gladwell define activism? How does he distinguish between “strong-tie” and “weak-tie” social activism? Explain this distinction and its relevance to Gladwell’s argument.

Gladwell argues that those with strong ties to a cause, such as those who have close family or friends involved, are more likely to continue to participate as a revolution or other movement drags on or becomes difficult. He contrasts that commitment to people who have only “weak ties” to others in a movement; these activists are less likely to take on “financial or personal risk,” as he says in paragraph 18. This distinction is one of his major arguments in support of his claim that revolutions like the civil rights movement had “strong-tie” activists, while social media activism promotes only “weak-tie” activism.

4. Read Dennis Baron’s blog post on theysayiblog.com. How do his views compare with Gladwell’s—how are they similar, and how do they differ?

Baron and Gladwell both agree that social media has not had a particularly strong influence in the Middle Eastern uprisings of the past few years; for example, they both include the detail that Iranian Twitter users were mostly outside the country. They differ in that Gladwell does not see social media’s potential as a tool for change, whereas Baron argues that such technologies do signal “rapid-fire change.” Baron also asserts that the same technologies can be used by governments to suppress revolution, using the kind of hierarchical organization Gladwell details in his article.
In this essay, which opens the concluding section of *In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto* (2008), Michael Pollan argues that a focus on single nutrients (what he calls nutritionism) impedes an accurate, comprehensive understanding of healthy eating. The only solution to Americans’ eating problems, he argues, is to “stop eating a Western diet.” Creating low-carbohydrate or low-fat foods does nothing to improve the Western diet, and both the food and medical industries benefit from competing scientific theories about nutrition. Instead, Pollan suggests that we avoid processed foods when possible and consider how a healthier environment might lead to healthier food options. He concludes the chapter by reminding readers of his credo: “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.”

**Teaching Notes**

Have students visit Pollan’s website, [www.michaelpollan.com](http://www.michaelpollan.com), and analyze how he positions himself in the conversation about healthy eating.

**Related Essays**


Mary Maxfield, “Food as Thought: Resisting the Moralization of Eating” [p. 442]

Jonathan Safran Foer, “Against Meat” [p. 448]

David Zinczenko, “Don’t Blame the Eater” [p. 462]


**Joining the Conversation**

1. What does Michael Pollan mean when he refers to the “Western diet”? Why does he believe Americans need to “escape” from it?

   Because this chapter appears partway through his book *In Defense of Food: An Eater’s Manifesto* (2008), Pollan does not spend much time defining the concept in this excerpt. He does say in paragraph 13, “A hallmark of the Western diet is food that is fast, cheap, and easy.” Students may need clarification that it is a diet of processed foods, high in carbohydrates, sugars, and unhealthy fats, and low in fruits and vegetables. Pollan thinks Americans should “escape” from such a diet because,
as he says in paragraph 5, “people eating a Western diet are prone to a complex of chronic diseases that seldom strike people eating more traditional diets.”

2. Pollan begins with a “they say,” citing a variety of scientific theories known as nutritionism. Summarize his response to these views. What is his objection to such views, and to the business and research interests that promote them?

   Nutritionism, as Pollan defines it, focuses on single nutrients (like fats, carbohydrates, or sugars) as responsible for our health problems. Proponents of such theories seek to engineer food to make it healthier, but Pollan argues that such processed food is more damaging to our health and that instead “we should simply avoid any food that has been processed to such an extent that it is more the product of industry than of nature” (¶9). He argues that the food and medical industries promote nutritionism and medicine-based interventions rather than wholesale change because current eating habits fund both industries. Pollan also believes that healthy eating is connected to a healthy environment.

3. If Pollan were to read Mary Maxfield’s response to this article (pp. 442–47), how might he, in turn, respond to her?

   Pollan might object to Maxfield’s argument that his theory of eating is another form of the nutritionist, food-industry hype that he supposedly objects to. He would point out that it does not eliminate one food group or bolster the food industries. (See paragraphs 1–3 of Maxfield’s essay.) He would also disagree that conflating health and weight is problematic, as he lists various “Western diseases” that stem from eating the so-called the Western diet, including obesity-linked problems such as diabetes and heart disease.

4. It’s likely that Pollan favors (and shops at) local farmers’ markets. Go to theysayiblog.com and search for “Mark Bittman on Farmers’ Markets.” What does he say about them: who, according to Bittman, do they most benefit?

   Mark Bittman argues that “Farmers’ markets are not just markets. They’re educational systems that teach us how food is raised and why that matters.” He notes, however, that it’s best when the people who have actually produced the food are present to answer questions; markets that include a lot of non-local food aren’t ideal. Bittman argues that consumers aren’t the only ones who benefit from such markets: farmers and the cities that host the markets do as well. Therefore, because “markets benefit everyone,” Bittman calls for more “infrastructure—either permanent space or, at least, water and electricity.” Bittman also argues that farmers’ markets often include good prices, but that the system could be improved: cities and municipalities that host markets could support them more instead of charging fees, and a “unified, wireless form of payment” could be set up to help make transactions faster.
What Are You Buying When You Buy Organic? [p. 428]

Steven Shapin

In “What Are You Buying When You Buy Organic?” Steven Shapin argues that eating organically doesn't necessarily mean that consumers are eating locally and that “neither ‘organic’ nor ‘local’ is necessarily ‘sustainable’” (¶4). Although some people who prefer organic food do so because of a desire to help the environment, Shapin points out that big businesses like Earthbound Farm ship their products long distances, which can affect the environment adversely. He also warns consumers that just because a food is labeled organic, it doesn’t mean it’s more nutritious, nor that it tastes better. Shapin details the four meals Michael Pollan analyzes in his book, The Omnivore’s Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals, including fast food, a “Big Organic” meal, a meal Pollan “himself had a hand in producing” (¶13) on a farm, and a meal “for which he had almost total personal responsibility” (¶14). The final meal in particular is not realistic for the average person, Shapin argues, because of the vast amount of knowledge required. In fact, he warns, committing to organic farming endangers the efforts to feed the world’s hungry. Overall, he acknowledges that “there is no way to make food choices without making moral choices as well” (¶11), and he implies that those who champion local and organic movements may not be aware of the effects of their actions.

Teaching Notes

Have students visit the websites of Earthbound Farm, Cascadian Farm, or other organic food outlets, and ask them to analyze how the companies present themselves to consumers.

Ask students about their personal experiences in the food business: some may know or have worked on farms, and others may have worked at grocery stores or fast-food restaurants. How do those experiences affect their views on this essay?

Related Essays

Michael Pollan, “Escape from the Western Diet” [p. 420]
Mary Maxfield, “Food as Thought: Resisting the Moralization of Eating” [p. 442]
Jonathan Safran Foer, “Against Meat” [p. 448]
David Zinczenko, “Don’t Blame the Eater” [p. 462]

Joining the Conversation

1. Steven Shapin focuses on Earthbound Farm and other such companies to illustrate some of the practices of organic food companies and their effects on society. What does he say about the overall impact these companies and others like them have on the environment?
Shapin says that Earthbound Farm and similar companies reduce the amount of pesticides and fertilizers used, but he points out that they still need to ship their products across the country, which requires the use of a lot of fossil fuel. “The net benefit of all this to the planet is hard to assess” (¶4), he says, implying that such organic businesses may not be helping as much as consumers think they are.

2. Shapin lists the four meals Michael Pollan discusses in his book *The Omnivore’s Dilemma*, ranging from factory-farm-raised fast food to a “perfect meal” for which he had “almost total personal responsibility,” and notes that Pollan “wants to eat locally” and “to do his bit to save the planet.” How does Shapin respond to what Pollan says?

Shapin agrees with Pollan that the elements of a fast food meal are “all very bad things” (¶12), but he thinks that practices encouraging only local eating might endanger efforts to feed the hungry around the world. Like Pollan, Shapin knows that the meal encompassing “almost total personal responsibility” is not realistic in the long term, and he goes beyond that, pointing out that “the knowledge required is potentially infinite” (¶15). Shapin would agree with Pollan that the Big Organic meal is “still not perfect,” but for very different reasons.

3. Shapin claims that Earthbound Farm is not a small operation but rather “a very big business” that is no more sustainable than any other food company. With this in mind, visit thesayiblog.com and read Elizabeth Weiss’s article “What Does ‘The Scarecrow’ Tell Us about Chipotle?” Do you think Shapin would characterize Chipotle in the same way? Why or why not? Cite examples from Weiss’s article to support your response.

Shapin would characterize Chipotle in the same way because it sometimes buys beef from “conventional suppliers” (¶8 of Weiss) and because it needs a number of meat suppliers (¶11 of Weiss). He would see it as no different from Earthbound Farm or any other large agribusiness. In fact, Weiss’s article supports Shapin’s point that organic methods aren’t necessarily sustainable to meet the demand needed to feed the world’s population (¶15 of Weiss).

4. Shapin concludes by suggesting that, while a small number of people may believe that eating organic arugula is a matter of great importance, for most people, “it’s simply salad.” What do you think he means by this statement? How might Michael Pollan (pp. 420–27) respond to this assertion?

In “Escape from the Western Diet,” Pollan argues that we should “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.” With this credo in mind, it would seem that he would prefer people eat organic arugula rather than fast food, so that its identity as “simply salad” would not matter. However, Shapin’s summary of *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* makes it clear that Pollan also thinks that we should “know much more about what we’re putting in our mouths” (¶15). To Pollan, the provenance of that arugula and how far it was shipped to market affects its value. He would disagree that arugula is “simply salad” and argue that it has a much larger meaning.
In this essay, Mary Maxfield responds to Michael Pollan’s credo of “Eat food. Not too much. Mostly plants.” with her own motto: “Trust yourself. Trust your body. Meet your needs.” She argues that Pollan’s approach to nutrition does what he criticizes in other food theories, since it eliminates one type of food—processed food. She also disagrees with Pollan’s conflation of diet, health, and weight, and she counters that the obesity crisis is overhyped, and people can be healthy at almost any size. She argues that people “will eat in a way that is good for them, given the opportunity.” In the end, Maxfield points out, our attitudes about food and health are influenced by culture, and food itself “isn’t moral or immoral.”

Teaching Notes
Have students visit Maxfield’s blog and read additional blog posts on fat acceptance and Health at Every Size (HAES). Ask them if they’ve heard these sorts of arguments in the media and how they respond to them.

Related Essays
MICHAEL POLLAN, “Escape from the Western Diet” [p. 420]
JONATHAN SAFRAN FOER, “Against Meat” [p. 448]
DAVID ZINCEZenko, “Don’t Blame the Eater” [p. 462]
RADLEY BALKO, “What You Eat Is Your Business” [p. 466]

Joining the Conversation
1. In what ways does Mary Maxfield disagree with Michael Pollan (pp. 420–27) and other critics of the Western diet? What is her “they say,” and what does she say?
   Maxfield disagrees with Pollan and other critics of the Western diet who connect unhealthy eating and unhealthy weight. In paragraph 4, Maxfield notes that “they say” that “overeating constitutes ‘the greatest threat’ to our survival,” but she argues that conflating health and weight is problematic. Instead, she thinks, we should eat enough to meet our needs and be trusted to make our own decisions about food.

2. What supporting evidence does Maxfield offer to counter the views of Michael Pollan and other critics?
   Maxfield relies on quotes from academic experts who see, as she explains it in paragraph 6, “flaws behind perceptions of fatness, diet, and health.” She quotes Paul Campos, a law professor and journalist; fat-acceptance activist Kate Harding; and nutritionist Michelle Allison. These sources argue that our weight does not necessarily
determine our health and that we can make healthy eating decisions even if we eat “forbidden” foods.

3. Read Jonathan Safran Foer’s article (pp. 448–61), and compare what he says with what Maxfield says. Which is more convincing, and why?

   Students’ answers will vary. Those who are vegetarians or are concerned about animal rights may be swayed by Foer’s arguments that because of animal cruelty, we shouldn’t eat meat. Others will be swayed by Maxfield’s use of evidence from outside sources and careful consideration of the opposite point of view (Michael Pollan). Their answer may come down to whether they agree or disagree with Maxfield’s assertion that “Food . . . isn’t moral or immoral. Inherently, food is ethnically neutral; notions of good and bad, healthy and unhealthy are projected onto it by culture” (¶9). If they agree, they will see Foer’s argument as one of those projections.

4. Since this question is a writing prompt for students, an answer isn’t provided.

5. Go to theysayiblog.com and click on “What Should We Eat?” Read the article by Stuart Elliott about the ad campaign promoting Whole Foods as “America’s Healthiest Grocery Store.” How do you think Maxfield would respond to this message? How do you respond?

   Maxfield would be wary of a statement by a Whole Foods vice president that the store’s goal is “to assist shoppers to ‘make more meaningful choices’ at a time when they ‘are hungrier than ever before for information about the food they eat.’” Maxfield would worry that such choices are cultural projections and may lead people away from trusting their bodies and eating to meet their personal needs. Students who agree with Maxfield may feel the same way; others will be swayed by the store’s statements that emphasize its social responsibility. Some students will think that the store is still too expensive or that organic foods are not worth the expense.
In “Against Meat,” novelist Jonathan Safran Foer argues that “the stories that are served with food matter” (¶41). He explains that his grandmother, who survived World War II in Eastern Europe, wanted her family to eat as much as possible. Foer also describes formative experiences in his childhood and adolescence that led to an off-and-on again relationship with vegetarianism. Despite that vacillation, he says that he and his wife now are raising their children as vegetarians because of the cruelty to animals that happens on factory farms and how those farms contribute to climate change and other environmental issues. Foer acknowledges that eating meat can be pleasurable, and he says that his children will be able to choose what they eat on their own when they’re older. However, he is convinced that the lessons he learned from his grandmother, including “if nothing matters, there’s nothing to save” (¶66), mean that vegetarianism is highly important for his family—and perhaps for others, too.

Teaching Notes
Have students find both positive and negative online reviews of Foer’s book, *Eating Animals*, from which this essay is adapted. Ask them what those reviews say, and how and why they differ in their evaluation of Foer’s book.

Some students may have read Foer’s novels, *Everything Is Illuminated* (2002) and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005), or seen the film adaptations. Ask if they see common themes between either of these books and the essay.

Related Essays
MICHAEL POLLAN, “Escape from the Western Diet” [p. 420]
MARY MAXFIELD, “Food as Thought: Resisting the Moralization of Eating” [p. 442]

Joining the Conversation
1. Jonathan Safran Foer spends a lot of time talking about his relationship with his grandmother and the role that her cooking and her ideas about food had in the development of his own attitudes toward food. How do you think Foer’s grandmother influenced his eventual embrace of vegetarianism? Cite passages in his text to support your answer.

   Foer’s grandmother instilled in him the value that food is not just food. Although food carries a different emotional weight for his grandmother, Foer notes that she “wasn’t preparing food, but humans” (¶52). His final story, about her refusing a piece of pork during the war because of dietary restrictions she observed,
demonstrates her dictum that “if nothing matters, there’s nothing to save” (¶66). Foer puts this point into practice as he believes that animal treatment matters and that he should do something about it by practicing vegetarianism with his family.

2. In writing about his move to vegetarianism, a topic he takes very seriously, Foer injects humor at times. How do his humorous comments affect the way you read his essay?

   In some cases, the humor demonstrates the challenges of eating vegetarian, which may create a connection with those who have struggled to make a change in their health habits or with those who don’t want to eat vegetarian. Students might also say that some humorous comments (such as the third sentence of ¶50) serve to characterize Foer and to lighten the mood about a possibly very dark topic.

3. So what? Foer explains why being vegetarian matters to him. Has he convinced you that you should care? If so, how has he done so? If not, help him out: how could he do better?

   Students will have different answers to this question. Those who care may do so because of the information on factory farms in paragraphs 43-45 or because of the argument about putting values into practice. Others may suggest that he doesn’t take the opposite point of view into account except in his own struggles to stay vegetarian. They might also say that he doesn’t address ways vegetarians can compensate for the nutrients they would get from eating meat. If students say that he should be using evidence from other sources, have a conversation about genre expectations.

4. Compare Foer’s narrative of how and why he became a vegetarian to Mary Maxfield’s essay (pp. 442–47) arguing against treating food as a moral issue. What does each author say about the role of food in our lives?

   Mary Maxfield would agree with Foer’s grandmother that “no foods are bad for you” (¶7), and she is wary of arguments that recommend eating in particular ways for the sake of our health. She warns that morals often lead to an assumption that there are right and wrong foods or choices and suggests that instead people should prioritize trusting their bodies. Maxfield cautions against using morals as a reason not to eat something and would disagree with Foer’s implied argument that not just his family but others should be vegetarians. However, she would say that he and his family should “trust their body” as they make their decisions about food. Both authors believe food matters, but disagree about how and why it matters.
In “Don’t Blame the Eater,” David Zinczenko responds to arguments that overweight people are to blame for their health problems. Instead, Zinczenko argues, we should hold fast-food chains accountable for marketing to children. He points out that it is difficult to find nutritional information for the food these restaurants serve, and he uses his own experience to demonstrate that children often don’t have healthy options available to them. He warns readers that the rise in Type 2 diabetes in children hurts all of us as healthcare costs soar. In the end, he calls for more transparency in the restaurant industry regarding calorie counts, and he concludes that lawsuits against the industry have merit.

**Teaching Notes**

In paragraph 8, Zinczenko notes that “there are no calorie information charts on fast-food packaging.” This essay was published before new industry standards, and more restaurants are making nutritional information available. Ask students to research the calorie counts of some of their favorite meals to see how easy it is to find this information now. Also see if they think it’s important to have such information available to consumers.

**Related Essays**

RADLEY BALKO, “What You Eat Is Your Business” [p. 466]


MARION NESTLE, “The Supermarket: Prime Real Estate” [p. 496]

DAVID H. FREEDMAN, “How Junk Food Can End Obesity” [p. 506]

**Joining the Conversation:**

1. Summarize Zinczenko’s arguments (his “I say”) against the practices of fast-food companies. How persuasive are these arguments?

   Zinczenko argues that fast-food companies do not provide alternatives to the fat- and calorie-laden meals they serve, and that they do not prominently display caloric and other nutritional information for these products. As he writes in his final paragraph, “Fast-food companies are marketing to children a product with proven health hazards and no warning labels.” Opinions may differ as to how persuasive these arguments are, but his statistics about diabetes suggest a definite health risk. These arguments also support his larger point that lawsuits against such companies are justified.
2. One important move in all good argumentative writing is to introduce possible objections to the position being argued—what this book calls naysayers. What objections does Zinczenko introduce, and how does he respond? Can you think of other objections that he might have noted?

Zinczenko introduces objections to his arguments at two points: in his first paragraph when he raises the question “Whatever happened to personal responsibility?” and in paragraph 7, where he also phrases the objection as a question (“Shouldn’t we know better than to eat two meals a day in fast-food restaurants?”). He responds to these objections by pointing out that fast-food restaurants are “the only available options for an American kid to get an affordable meal.” Students may think of other objections, such as the argument that parents should do more to supervise the diets of their children, teach them good eating habits, and work to counteract the advertising of fast-food chains.

3. How does the story that Zinczenko tells about his own experience in paragraphs 3 and 4 support or fail to support his argument? How could the same story be used to support an argument opposed to Zinczenko’s?

By showing that he himself faced the same predicament as the young people who are suing McDonald’s, Zinczenko humanizes the problem and perhaps makes readers more sympathetic to their lawsuit. The fact that he was able to learn to manage his diet, however, could be used to support the opposing argument that other young people should be able to do so as well instead of blaming fast-food restaurants for their weight problems.

4. So what? Who cares? How does Zinczenko make clear to readers why his topic matters? Or, if he does not, how might he do so?

Most students will likely feel that Zinczenko succeeds in making clear that his topic matters. He starts out by noting the lawsuit against McDonald’s, something that has gotten significant publicity, and he goes on to document the skyrocketing rates of childhood diabetes, directly linking them to obesity. Paragraph 9 provides an eye-opening example of the staggering calorie count of a supposedly dietetic chicken salad offered by one company.
In “What You Eat Is Your Business,” Radley Balko argues that government efforts to curb obesity infringe on Americans’ freedom of choice and that we should focus instead on personal responsibility. He points out how both Republicans and Democrats have enacted policies that affect schools, park services, the advertising industry, and the healthcare industry, the latter of which he worries is headed towards socialism. “We’re becoming less responsible for our own health, and more responsible for everyone else’s,” he argues in paragraph 5. Balko argues that we shouldn’t consider obesity a public health matter but instead enable insurance companies and other businesses to make it a matter of personal responsibility: “reward healthy lifestyles and penalize poor ones” (¶9).

Teaching Notes
Balko identifies himself as a “small-l” libertarian. Students may not be familiar with a libertarian political ideology, so ask them what they know about libertarian principles and have a discussion about how it differs from conservatism.

Ask students about their reactions to Balko’s central claim: is obesity a matter of public health, personal responsibility, or both?

Related Essays
MARY MAXFIELD, “Food as Thought: Resisting the Moralization of Eating” [p. 442]
DAVID ZINCEVENKO, “Don’t Blame the Eater” [p. 462]
MARION NESTLE, “The Supermarket: Prime Real Estate” [p. 496]
DAVID H. FREEDMAN, “How Junk Food Can End Obesity” [p. 506]

Joining the Conversation
1. What does Radley Balko claim in this essay? How do you know? What position is he responding to? Cite examples from the text to support your answer.

Balko’s claim in the essay is that government intervention to curtail obesity (including limiting access to high-calorie foods, requiring menu labeling of nutritional value and fat and calorie content, and taxing high-calorie food), as well as treating obesity as a public health issue, is wrong-headed; instead, personal responsibility should be encouraged. He also argues the larger point that the socialization and government subsidization of medicine leads people to become less responsible for their own health and encourages them to continue to behave in unhealthy ways. See paragraphs 2–3, 5, and 8–9.
2. Reread the last sentence of paragraph 1: “In other words, bringing government between you and your waistline.” This is actually a sentence fragment, but it functions as metacommentary, inserted by Balko to make sure that readers see his point. Imagine that this statement were not there, and reread the first three paragraphs. Does it make a difference in how you read this piece?

Without this fragment that ends the first paragraph, Balko’s negative stance would not be clear through the end of the second paragraph (unless one noted the negative connotation of language such as “agitating for a panoply of government anti-obesity initiatives”). But he makes his position explicit at the beginning of paragraph 3.

3. Notice the direct quotations in paragraph 7. How has Balko integrated these quotations into his text—how has he introduced them, and what, if anything, has he said to explain them and tie them to his own text? Are there any changes you might suggest? How do key terms in the quotations echo one another? (See Chapter 3 for advice on quoting, and pp. 114–16 for help on identifying key terms.)

The first is a direct quotation, which Balko introduces by naming both the speaker and the organization she represents. The second is not so much a quotation as a phrase included in quotation marks so that Balko can distance himself from it; “personal responsibility bias” is a concept promulgated by trial lawyers that Balko finds ridiculous. He comments directly on the title of the ABC News documentary as a way of emphasizing the point made in the two previous quotations that the idea of personal responsibility, in his view, is being given short shrift.

4. Balko makes his own position about the so-called obesity crisis very clear, but does he consider any of the objections that might be offered to his position? If so, how does he deal with those objections? If not, what objections might he have raised?

Although Balko offers examples of what is being proposed by those he opposes and provides a brief summary of their views, he does not consider direct objections to his own position in any detail. For example, he doesn’t explore the issue of the cost benefits of governmental intervention to curtail obesity, an issue that would be raised in opposition to his “leave it up to individuals” approach.
In “The Extraordinary Science of Addictive Junk Food,” Michael Moss uses interviews with former and current food industry employees to demonstrate that companies use food science and strategic marketing to increase consumers’ eating, and in turn, profit for their businesses. He begins by detailing a meeting among CEOs who are discussing the obesity epidemic. While one Kraft executive, Michael Mudd, wanted the industry to change its methods, a General Mills CEO shut down that idea and told the attendees to keep doing what they were doing. Moss then presents three case studies to illustrate how exactly this kind of “extraordinary science” occurs. The first describes how Dr. Pepper engineered Cherry Vanilla Dr. Pepper through “product optimization” (¶21), a process that tries to find the “bliss point” of a food. The second case study uses documents obtained by a former employee to prove that Frito-Lay defended its use of high levels of sodium in its foods and improved its profits by extending already popular food product lines. In the final case study, Moss interviews a former Coca-Cola executive ashamed at his efforts to market the soda to some of Brazil’s poorest communities. That executive now works on a carrot marketing campaign, “doing penance for his Coca-Cola years” (¶59). Moss’s overall concern is the convenience and low cost of these addictive foods and the harmful impact they have on long-term health.

Teaching Notes
Michael Moss’s website has many resources for those wanting to learn a little more, including two videos: “How the government got you to eat more cheese” and “how to read a label.”

Related Essays
DAVID ZINCEZENKO, “Don’t Blame the Eater” [p. 462]
RADLEY BALKO, “What You Eat Is Your Business” [p. 466]
MARION NESTLE, “The Supermarket: Prime Real Estate” [p. 496]
DAVID H. FREEDMAN, “How Junk Food Can End Obesity” [p. 506]

Joining the Conversation
1. Michael Moss provides three examples of scientific research on junk food and its effects. What common denominator links these examples? What makes the science of addictive junk food so extraordinary?
Moss’s three examples (Dr. Pepper, Frito-Lay, and Coca-Cola) all demonstrate the interplay of business marketing and food engineering within food companies to get consumers to eat or drink more. Students’ answers for the second question will vary, but they may say it’s extraordinary because they weren’t aware of the degree to which scientists engineer foods to make them as pleasing to our taste buds as possible.

2. Moss opens this essay by describing a meeting that the leaders of several major food companies held to discuss the obesity epidemic and how to respond to it. Why do you think he begins with this story? How does it set the stage for the rest of the piece?

Students will likely say that it’s a “hook” to bring the reader into the essay, a common introductory technique. It also sets up a “they say” argument: the executives argue that their companies need to be successful and that catering to health needs would hurt the bottom line. The anecdote also introduces some of the companies in the junk food industry that Moss will look at more closely, with the testimony of former insiders who are willing to share their stories.

3. Moss is able to present complex technical information in such a way that non-scientists can understand it. One way he does this is by using colloquial language to explain technical terms such as “product optimization,” “bliss point,” and “sensory-specific satiety.” This technique helps us understand his topic, but how also does it make his argument interesting—and persuasive?

Students might see the connection between Moss’s style choices and Chapter 9 (“Academic Writing Doesn’t Mean Setting Aside Your Own Voice”), which points out that “formal/informal mixings” appear often in journalistic writing with the aim to make complex ideas clear to nonspecialists. The terms themselves serve as evidence that food scientists are part of a highly skilled community that has devised its own terms to help create the most ideal products that will make the most profit. The use of these terms may persuade readers that the industry is trying to manipulate them through their engineering of food.

4. Moss reports that the major food companies hire experts to make their products as appealing as possible. Similarly, on pp. 496–505, Marion Nestle discusses ways that psychologists and marketing specialists help supermarkets arrange items to increase their appeal and boost sales. Now that you know about these tactics, what are some specific actions you can take when you shop for food?

After reading Moss, students might look at the salt and sugar content in their foods, or the size of the products. They also will see more clearly when a line of foods has been extended, such as Cheetos or Lay’s potato chips. From Nestle, students will learn that they should bring a shopping list, stick to it, spend as little time in the store as possible, and be aware that the displays at the ends of aisles and other design elements are designed to make them want to buy junk food.
In “The Supermarket: Prime Real Estate,” Marion Nestle argues that supermarkets’ designers set up stores so that consumers are more likely to buy more products. Though consumers may think they have choices, they don’t. She notes that the growing field of consumer research behavior focuses on how to “expose you to the largest possible number of items that you can stand to see” (¶5), and she lists the “fundamental rules” of retail, such as putting the most commonly bought items at the back of the store. She notes that supermarkets also often get paid to display particular products at the ends of aisles or in other high-demand places. Nestle includes a “they say” argument, when she introduces the idea that stores have slim profit margins and need “to grow to stay viable” (¶11), but she points out that they have billions of dollars in sales each year. This issue matters, according to Nestle, because “if you buy more, you are quite likely to eat more. And if you eat more, you are more likely to gain weight and become less healthy” (¶12). Food retailers say that how much people consume is up to them and that “personal responsibility” (¶13) is important, but Nestle warns consumers that the choice is taken out of their hands.

**Teaching Notes**

Although this essay is taken from a 2006 book, Nestle still participates in conversations about the food industry and its effects on consumers. Students can visit her website, FoodPolitics.com, to see what issues she has been discussing lately.

**Related Essays**

David Zinczenko, “Don’t Blame the Eater” [p. 462]

**Joining the Conversation**

1. The title of this essay tells us the topic: supermarkets. The subtitle adds some metacommentary, telling us Nestle’s main point. What is the main point?

   Nestle’s main point is that supermarkets, through their organization of the store’s “real estate,” attempt to manipulate consumers into buying more than they intended. The food retailers say that they offer choices, but Nestle argues that consumers aren’t aware of the ways in which that choice is made for them by store design.
2. Why, according to Nestle, do supermarket chains invest so heavily in consumer research? What does she claim are the results of this research? Give two or three examples from her text.

   In paragraph 4, Nestle says that supermarket chains use research to know “how to lay out the stores, where to put specific products, how to position products on shelves, and how to set prices and advertise products.” Paragraph 5 includes a long list of more specific recommendations, including end-cap displays, placement of top sellers at the back of the store, and placement of store brands. Later in the essay, she demonstrates that larger bottles of Pepsi cost less per ounce (¶12 and 13), which may deceive customers, and her next-to-last paragraph includes a list of other store choices, such as background music and bakery smells, that try to maximize profits.

3. Writers often use metacommentary to explain something they’ve said, to elaborate on an idea, or to offer other such guidance. Paragraph 5 includes two examples of metacommentary, in the second and fourth sentences. What purposes do these sentences serve? Find several other instances of metacommentary in this essay and explain their purposes. See Chapter 10 for more on metacommentary.

   Both the second and fourth sentences in paragraph five interpret the language of a marketing textbook to point out the ways in which that field’s choice of words obscures the way their practices affect consumers. Nestle’s goal is to educate consumers, so she shows them what marketers have said and also translates it into terms the average person can understand. Similar definitions of terms happen in paragraphs 7 and 16. In another kind of metacommentary, Nestle offers further guidance to the reader by listing the size and price of Pepsi-Cola in a table, instead of in a paragraph: “The sizes and prices are best shown in a Table” (¶13), she writes.

4. According to Nestle, food retailers say that if we eat too much, it’s our problem, “not theirs.” What do you think David Zinczenko would say to that (pp. 462–65)?

   David Zinczenko would agree with Nestle that retailers have the upper hand. In his essay, he considers the way streets are designed and argues that it’s challenging to find alternatives to fast food. Though he also focuses on the difficulties of finding nutritional information, a topic slightly outside the scope of Nestle’s essay, he says that food companies “would do well to protect themselves, and their customers, by providing the nutrition information people need to make informed choices about their products” (¶11). Nestle, too, wants consumers to be able to make educated choices, and both authors worry about junk food’s bad effects on health.
In “How Junk Food Can End Obesity,” David H. Freedman argues that processed-food and fast-food companies could help end the obesity epidemic by introducing lower-calorie foods that taste good and are affordable for overweight consumers. He explains the views of Michael Pollan, Michael Moss, and other writers who excoriate the food industry for their manipulations of food to improve taste. Such writers also extol “wholesome” foods, but Freedman says that those alternatives are as fatty and calorie-dense as fast-food options. He acknowledges that much of the menu at fast-food restaurants is unhealthy, but he notes that particular products—like a cod sandwich at Carl’s Jr. or an egg-white breakfast sandwich at McDonald’s—have lower calories and many healthy ingredients. Processing does not limit the nutritional elements of a food, Freedman argues, and he points out that the “wholesome” food advocates work against possible changes in fast food because of the “tautology at the heart of the movement: processed foods are unhealthy because they aren’t natural, full stop” (¶31). Obesity is a problem we need to solve, Freedman says, and the best way to do so is to have tasty food with fewer calories, something processed foods can make happen in a cheaper way than the wholesome-food industry.

Teaching Notes
Ask students what menu items they pick when they eat fast food, and visit company websites to look at the nutritional information.

Related Essays
Michael Pollan, “Escape from the Western Diet”  [p. 420]
David Zinczenko, “Don’t Blame the Eater”  [p. 462]

Joining the Conversation
1. Early in this essay, David H. Freedman explicitly lays out a “they say” that frames his argument. Summarize the position that he then sets out to refute.

The “they” in Freedman’s “they say” includes Michael Pollan, Michael Moss, and other food writers who argue that processed food makes us sick. Instead, they argue, we should be eating “fresh, unprocessed, local, seasonal, real food” (¶7).
2. What is Freedman’s argument, and how does he support it? Why do you think he cites his own personal experiences? What do they contribute to his argument—and to his essay as a whole?

Freedman’s main argument first appears in paragraph 12: “Through its growing sway over health-conscious consumers and policy makers, the wholesome-food movement is impeding the progress of the one segment of the food world that is actually positioned to take effective, near-term steps to reverse the obesity trend: the processed-food industry.” He cites his own experiences to demonstrate that he, too, wants food that tastes good (like many consumers of fast food) but that is healthy, and to strengthen his credibility as an expert on the topic. His examples help him prove his point that much “wholesome” food is high in fat and calories and that lower-calorie fast-food options are the best way to help consumers lose weight.

3. Paragraphs 30 and 31 introduce opinions that differ from Freedman’s views. How fairly does he represent these opposing views, and how persuasively does he respond to what they say?

Some students may say that Freedman goes too far in his objections, that he doesn’t quote Melanie Warner directly, for example, in his objections to her methods, and he uses charged words to introduce the perspectives he disagrees with—for example, he writes, “The Pew Charitable Trusts’ Food Additives Project . . . has bemoaned the fact . . . .” However, others will note that he raises valid concerns about Warner’s “vague, weakly supported, tired, or insignificant” points and that he has a persuasive response to the Pew Charitable Trusts’ objections to the FDA’s review guidelines.

4. Freedman is particularly critical of the views of Michael Pollan (pp. 420–27). What are his specific criticisms? How do you think Pollan might respond?

Freedman is critical that Michael Pollan and “Pollanites” don’t acknowledge that some of the dishes they promote are just as unhealthy as some fast food. He points out that “Pollan himself makes it clear in his writing that he has little problem with fat—as long as it’s not in food ‘your great-grandmother wouldn’t recognize’ ” (¶23). Freedman objects to the conflation of “industrial processing of food with the adding of fat and sugar” (¶37) and to the view that “add[ing] healthier ingredients to food isn’t a potential solution, it’s part of the problem” (¶61), which leaves the industry in a no-win situation: they can’t engineer healthy products, and their other products aren’t healthy enough. Pollan would respond that his three rules for eating include the caveat: “not too much.” He would stand behind his support for “real food” and argue that some fats are better than others for the body.
WHAT’S UP WITH THE AMERICAN DREAM?

*Inequality Has Been Going On Forever . . . but That Doesn’t Mean It’s Inevitable* [p. 542]

**DAVID LEONHARDT**

In “Inequality Has Been Going on Forever . . . but That Doesn’t Mean It’s Inevitable,” *New York Times* writer David Leonhardt summarizes the work of professor and economist Thomas Piketty and argues that as a society we can make choices that slow down or stop inequality. He describes the major point of Piketty’s book, *Capital in the Twenty-First Century*, that inequality has been “the historical norm” (¶2) unless a society experiences the upheaval of war or depression. After reading the book, Leonhardt calls Piketty, who explains his ideas further, in particular that those who make enough income to save and also invest in additional capital will have much more profit than their peers. While Piketty suggests a “global wealth tax” (¶11) to slow down the rate of inequality, Leonhardt focuses on another possible solution: education. In paragraph 11, he says, “When a society becomes more educated, many of its less-wealthy citizens quickly acquire an ephemeral but nonetheless crucial form of capital—knowledge—that can bring enormous returns.” So, in order to help those suffering from the effects of inequality, we should continue to invest in public education and encourage people to go to college, Leonhardt concludes.

**Teaching Notes**

Paragraphs 12–14 of this essay speak directly to many of the themes in Chapter 16. This essay would be a good way to connect Chapter 19 to themes of education.

Thomas Piketty has spoken about his book on numerous occasions: in a TED talk, appearances on *The Colbert Report*, and in conversations with staff members of *The Huffington Post* and *The Economist*. Many of the interviews are available online.

**Related Essays**

Edward McClelland, “RIP, the Middle Class: 1946–2013” [p. 549]

Paul Krugman, “Confronting Inequality” [p. 561]

Gary S. Becker and Kevin M. Murphy, “The Upside of Income Inequality” [p. 581]

Brandon King, “The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or on Hold?” [p. 610]

Monica Potts, “What’s Killing Poor White Women?” [p. 000]
from Chapter 16:
STEPHANIE OWEN AND ISABEL SAWHILL, “Should Everyone Go to College?” [p. 208]
FREEMAN HRABOWSKI, “Colleges Prepare People for Life” [p. 259]
MICHELLE OBAMA, “Bowie State University Commencement Speech” [p. 285]

Joining the Conversation

1. The first two paragraphs of this essay offer a “they say” on the subject of inequality. What is the argument that David Leonhardt wants to discuss, and what is his “I say” in the remainder of the essay?

   The “they say” argument is that inequality has been “the historical norm” (¶2) and is inevitable. He phrases this argument in several ways in the first paragraph and references Thomas Piketty in the second. His own argument, the “I say,” is that inequality is not inevitable, that we can make choices to stem its rise, in particular by focusing on education as an equalizer.

2. Leonhardt discusses the views of French economist Thomas Piketty throughout this piece. In one paragraph, summarize Piketty's views.

   Thomas Piketty argues that inequality has been present throughout history, and will continue to rise if we don’t make societal changes. In a conversation with Leonhardt, Piketty notes that the average person in the days before the Enlightenment experienced the same rate of return on their work as someone in a different income bracket. However, as Leonhardt explains it, “the rich earn enough money to save money,” which “allows them to make investments that other people simply cannot afford. And investments—whether stones, land, corporate stock or education—tend to bring a positive return” (¶9). Piketty points out that war, depression, or high tax rates on the wealthy can slow inequality, and he also argues that education is a form of capital “that can bring enormous returns” (¶11).

3. Leonhardt published this piece in the New York Times and thus could assume that many of his readers were generally informed about his topic. How might he have written it differently for an audience of first-year college students?

   Students will note that Leonhardt does define “capital,” and he explains complex economic ideas in clear terms. However, they might argue that the final sentence of paragraph 9, with an economic formula, would be out of place in a text for first-year college students, and that some terms might need more explanation, like “top marginal income-tax rates.” Others may notice that when Leonhardt describes the advantages of a college education, he could address college students more directly or offer examples of students who turned their knowledge into other forms of capital. Students who have heard of Piketty might also suggest that Leonhardt explain the viewpoints of his critics.
4. Monica Potts’s essay (pp. 591–609) examines the effects of poverty, lack of education, and scarce job opportunities on rural Americans. How might some of the material discussed in her essay be incorporated in Leonhardt’s essay to help him support his argument about inequality?

Although he mentions the “pay gap between college graduates and everyone else in this country” (¶12), Leonhardt could more closely examine the experience of those without even a high-school diploma, like Crystal Wilson in Potts’s essay, and the difficulty this demographic can have in breaking the cycle of poverty. He might also use some of Potts’s research on how education levels are linked to life expectancy to indicate an additional “so what” factor behind the need for a change in emphasis on education in order to fix inequality.
In “RIP, the Middle Class: 1946–2013,” Edward McClelland argues that the federal government needs to intervene in the economy by creating policies that would strengthen the middle class. He points out that after World War II and through the 1970s, America’s middle class had well-paying jobs that enabled them to buy the same products as the wealthy. However, in the 1980s, as manufacturing jobs moved overseas during a national recession, the middle class began to grow smaller. “Unfortunately, the middle class—especially the blue-collar middle class—is . . . starting to look like a fluke” (¶6), McClelland argues. He notes that the free market will not cause any change in that scenario, that “capitalism has been doing exactly what it was designed to do: concentrating wealth in the ownership class, while providing the mass of workers with just enough wages to feed, house and clothe themselves” (¶14). Because of this, the government should create policies that would protect the middle class.

**Teaching Notes**

Ask students to interview their parents and grandparents about their perspective on the economies of the 1970s and 1980s. Did they see the same patterns of prosperity that McClelland describes?

**Related Essays**

DAVID LEONHARDT, “Inequality Has Been Going on Forever . . . but That Doesn’t Mean It’s Inevitable” [p. 542]

PAUL KRUGMAN, “Confronting Inequality” [p. 561]

GARY S. BECKER AND KEVIN M. MURPHY, “The Upside of Income Inequality” [p. 581]

BRANDON KING, “The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or on Hold?” [p. 610]

TIM ROEMER, “America Remains the World’s Beacon of Success” [p. 618]


from Chapter 20:

SAUL KAPLAN, “The Plight of Young Males” [p. 732]

**Joining the Conversation**

1. Edward McClelland opens this article with a discussion of the industrial heyday of the United States, from the late 1940s through the 1970s, when blue-collar workers had their choice of well-paying jobs. What evidence does he give for this period of “shared prosperity”? What exactly does he mean by this term? Why, in his view, did the prosperity end, and what steps are required to bring it back?
In his description of the period of “shared prosperity” in the late twentieth century, McClelland includes an anecdote and personal observation about the buying power of the working middle class, those without college education but with strong jobs. He lists cars, boats, and other consumer goods that people were able to buy. “Shared prosperity” means that the workers and the business owners both prospered, “that capitalism had produced the workers paradise to which Communism unsuccessfully aspired” (¶6). This era ended when manufacturing jobs moved overseas during the Reagan era, McClelland argues, but additional choices made by the Carter and Clinton administrations also hurt the middle class. To bring back prosperity, he says, the federal government should intervene, empowering unions, raising the minimum wage, regulating businesses, and increasing taxes on the wealthy.

2. This selection comes from Salon, a progressive online news site that boasts of publishing “fearless commentary and criticism.” Where in the article do you find evidence of such writing, and of the author’s own political position? Cite specific examples from the text.

   McClelland’s progressive views are evident in his call for an “activist government” (¶15), but also in his assumption that unions should be stronger (¶21) and that the Affordable Care Act is “the most significant piece of social welfare legislation since the Great Society” (¶27). As question 3 points out, McClelland does not include much in the way of possible objections to his argument, perhaps assuming that readers of the site agree. Students may find his critiques of several presidents, both Democratic and Republican, or his use of absolute statements, such as “It’s time to declare an end to the deregulatory experiment that has resulted in the greatest disparity between the top earners and the middle earners in nearly a century” (¶29), as “fearless.”

3. McClelland offers a lot of evidence for his own views, but he does not say much about any other viewpoints. What objections might be raised to what he says, and where would you introduce them in his essay? How would doing so improve his argument?

   Students might know that conservative commentators would argue against government intervention, arguing that the market can correct itself and that regulation hurts businesses and leads to slower economic gains. Such viewpoints might be summarized and responded to near paragraphs 14 and 15 or paragraph 28. As Chapter 6 notes, including a naysayer enhances a writer’s credibility, “show[s] respect for your readers,” (p. 79) and helps them convey that s/he is knowledgeable about all viewpoints on the issue.

4. Brandon King, in his essay on the American Dream (pp. 610−17), argues that “supporting the richest sectors of the American economy will bring economic stability
and a full recovery.” How might McClelland respond to King? What evidence might he provide to prove King wrong?

McClelland would respond to King that past actions that supported the wealthy—including industry deregulation, nonsupport of unions, the North American Free Trade Agreement and other acts that helped move jobs overseas—didn’t bring economic stability to the country. He would also reiterate his point from paragraph 21, that “there’s a well-known graph that shows middle-class income share declining along the same axis as unionization.”
In “Confronting Inequality,” Paul Krugman details reasons that we should care about inequality and how we could reverse increases in income disparity between the wealthy and the poor. He argues that inequality harms society, since income inequality creates social inequality. Krugman also says that families approaching bankruptcy aren’t spending on luxuries but taking on mortgages they can’t afford so that their children can attend better schools. They do so because education is one way to achieve the American Dream, but Krugman points out that family status matters more than academic talent as a prediction of future success and that a lack of healthcare can hold back talented but poor children. Income inequality also corrupts politicians, he says, making it more difficult to enact policies to counter the effects of inequality. He proposes rolling back tax cuts for the wealthy and eliminating loopholes in the tax system, and he even suggests having middle class families pay slightly higher taxes in return for more of a “social safety net” (¶27). In addition, Krugman advocates for an increase in the minimum wage and stronger unions in order to “make America a middle-class nation again” (¶41).

Teaching Notes
Krugman mentions Horatio Alger in paragraph 10. Ask students to research the significance of that name and consider how it applies to Krugman’s arguments. This essay is one of the longer pieces in this section. Have a discussion about genre and length, and ask students to consider why this essay is substantially longer than some of the other essays. Students may not read the biographical notes (which state the original place of publication) carefully, so design an activity in which they identify and discuss the type of publication in which each essay in the chapter first appeared.

Related Essays
DAVID LEONHARDT, “Inequality Has Been Going on Forever . . . but That Doesn’t Mean It’s Inevitable” [p. 542]
EDWARD MCCLELLAND, “RIP the Middle Class: 1946–2013” [p. 549]
GARY S. BECKER AND KEVIN M. MURPHY, “The Upside of Income Inequality” [p. 581]
BRANDON KING, “The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or on Hold?” [p. 610]
TIM ROEMER, “America Remains the World’s Beacon of Success” [p. 618]
PEW RESEARCH CENTER, “King’s Dream Remains an Elusive Goal; Many Americans See Racial Disparities” [p. 627]
Joining the Conversation

1. Krugman begins by asking the “so what?” question in paragraph 1: “Why should we care about high and rising inequality?” How does he answer this question?

Krugman writes that people should care about “high and rising inequality” because of its negative effect on lower- and middle-income families and, more importantly, because a weakened middle class corrodes social relations and the political sphere, damaging society and democracy as a whole.

2. What evidence does Krugman provide for the prevalence of economic inequality in U.S. society? How convincing is this evidence to you?

The evidence Krugman presents includes the fact that bankruptcies have increased among middle-class families, largely because of increases in housing costs; that children of wealthy families are more likely to complete college than more talented students from poorer families because of the greater strains placed on such families; that the tax code is skewed to benefit the rich; and that the government has taken anti-union positions that have led to a sharp decline in union membership and a corresponding lowering of wages among workers in a variety of industries. Certainly, it is difficult to refute the central idea here that inequality exists.

3. Notice how many direct quotations Krugman includes. Why do you think he includes so many? What, if anything, do the quotations contribute that a summary or paraphrase would not?

It is likely that Krugman includes so many quotations in order to lend greater credibility to his argument and to let others’ words add force to the point he is making where a paraphrase would not add so much. For example, the quotation from Jefferson in paragraph 3 would have much less impact if it were not stated in his exact words, as would the quotation from Richistan in paragraph 6 and the quotation by Woodrow Wilson in paragraph 14.

4. In paragraph 4 Krugman quotes someone whose views he does not agree with, but then uses those views to support his own argument. How do you know he is quoting a view that he disagrees with?

Krugman makes clear that he is quoting a view he disagrees with in the opening sentence of the paragraph, which serves to set up the quotation. A writer who is “trying to argue the opposite” makes “[o]ne of the best arguments . . . for the social costs of inequality.”
In “The Upside of Income Inequality,” Gary S. Becker and Kevin M. Murphy argue that any discussion of inequality should consider “the rise in return on investments in human capital” (¶2), in particular, through education. They present data that shows how those with college and graduate school diplomas have higher wages than those with high school degrees, and that women and African Americans have gained the most “education premiums” (¶4) in the past twenty-five years. When the return on investment for a college degree is high, they say, higher college attendance follows. Becker and Murphy argue that a more educated society leads to “rising wages, productivity, and living standards” (¶9), and they note that the demand for skilled labor is growing more quickly than that of low-skilled work. Some demographic groups are being left behind by this focus on education, in particular “African American and Hispanic males” (¶13), which Becker and Murphy blame on the “breakdown of the American family, and the resulting low skill levels acquired by many children in elementary and secondary school—particularly individuals from broken households” (¶14). Becker and Murphy say we shouldn’t tax the rich to help those who are being left behind. Such a move would “reduce the productivity of the world’s leading economy by discouraging investments in its most productive and precious form of capital—human capital” (¶17).

**Teaching Notes**

For more context on the authors, you might point them to a 2010 New Yorker interview with Murphy that explains the importance of the University of Chicago to economics. Having students read two different obituaries for Becker, from the *New York Times* and Wall Street Journal, would also help the class have a discussion about the editorial leanings of different publications.

**Related Essays**

**David Leonhardt**, “Inequality Has Been Going on Forever . . . but That Doesn’t Mean It’s Inevitable” [p. 542]
**Edward McClelland**, “RIP the Middle Class: 1946–2013” [p. 549]
**Paul Krugman**, “Confronting Inequality” [p. 561]
**Brandon King**, “The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or on Hold?” [p. 610]
**Monica Potts**, “What’s Killing Poor White Women?” [p. 591]
Joining the Conversation

1. Why, according to Gary Becker and Kevin Murphy, has income inequality in the United States increased significantly since 1980? In what ways do they believe that this change is “beneficial and desirable”?

   Becker and Murphy say that income inequality has increased since 1980 because “the labor market is placing a greater emphasis on education, dispensing rapidly rising rewards to those who stay in school the longest” (¶3). This change is “beneficial and desirable,” as they say in paragraph 2, because it indicates “a rise in returns on investments in human capital.”

2. According to the authors, “Growth in the education level of the population has been a significant source of rising wages, productivity, and living standards over the past century” (¶9). Which groups have benefited from these developments, and which ones have not? What do Becker and Murphy say about what can be done to improve the situation of the less advantaged?

   Women and African Americans have benefited the most from these developments, according to Becker and Murphy’s data, while African American and Hispanic men have benefited the least. To improve this situation, Becker and Murphy say we should “focus attention on how to raise the fraction of American youth who complete high school and then go on for a college education” (¶15). They don’t offer specific solutions, but they do blame the “breakdown of the American family” (¶14) for the lack of cognitive and life skills in those who drop out of high school.

3. This article appeared in a magazine published by an institute “committed to expanding liberty, increasing individual opportunity, and strengthening free enterprise.” What aspects of the authors’ argument seem consistent with those goals? What other views do they mention, and how persuasively do they respond? What other objections could be raised?

   Students may notice that the authors’ central argument about the benefits of college education focuses on increasing individual opportunity. They may be less familiar with the phrase “free enterprise,” but those who understand that it means opposition to regulation may notice that in paragraph 15, Becker and Murphy say that it would be a “disaster” if Congress were to intervene. They also argue that higher taxes for the wealthy would not solve the problem, a stance consistent with a more conservative viewpoint.
Becker and Murphy include the opposite point of view briefly in paragraph 2, when they note that “politicians and many others in the United States have grown concerned that earnings inequality has increased among Americans.” To respond, they point out that in China and India, inequality was a side effect of economic growth that raised everyone’s living standards. Students might find this convincing, or they might note that those two economies differ greatly from that of the United States.

Becker and Murphy also mention another viewpoint in paragraph 16, when they say that “for many, the solution to an increase in inequality is to make the tax structure more progressive—raise taxes on high-income households and reduce taxes on low-income households.” Their response is that such a move effectively taxes the ability to go to college and subsidizes not graduating from high school. Students’ perception of this response as persuasive will vary—some will find it persuasive, and others may point out that taxing the 1 percent or very wealthy isn’t exactly a tax on going to college.

Other objections may include a reaction to Becker and Murphy’s idea that the breakdown of the family is responsible for the steady rate of high school dropouts: some students may point out that not just family structures, but institutionalized racism, poorly funded school systems, and intergenerational poverty make it difficult for people to get a good education. Another perspective is that there are vast differences in incomes for college graduates with different majors, the argument that Stephanie Owen and Isabel Sawhill explain in “Should Everyone Go to College?”.

4. Paul Krugman offers a different perspective on economic inequality (pp. 561–80). How might he respond to Becker and Murphy’s argument that earnings inequality should be considered “a favorable rather than an unfavorable development”?

   He would disagree. He notes that income inequality leads to social inequalities, including vast differences in debt, and “corrupts our politics” (¶14). In fact, he says, “high levels of inequality strain the bonds that hold us together as a society” (¶18). He even points out that education itself has some fundamental inequalities; some families even buy houses they can’t truly afford because they want to live in a good school district.

5. Since this question is a writing prompt for students, an answer isn’t provided.

6. Go to theysayiblog.com and read “Of the 1%, by the 1%, for the 1%” by Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel-winning economist who does not believe that inequality in the United States is at all “beneficial.” Imagine that Stiglitz wrote his article for the kind of politically conservative audience in favor of free enterprise that Becker and Murphy were writing for. How might Stiglitz have developed his argument differently to appeal to such readers? Consider his title, for example, and suggest a title that
would be more likely to appeal to such an audience. What in Becker and Murphy's article might he quote as a “they say”—and what then might he say?

Students will have a variety of new titles, but they might emphasize the theme of building a healthy economy to establish common ground with a more politically conservative audience. Stiglitz would likely have included different sorts of examples and a different tone by avoiding statements like “that argument is fundamentally wrong” (¶3). Further, he would need to demonstrate that the overall economy doesn't progress as much if income inequality is higher, perhaps by including additional data about the challenges that those from the lower ends of the income spectrum have in rising to the top (like Paul Krugman does). If he quoted Becker and Murphy, he would likely focus on their assertion that Congress should avoid making any laws to fix inequality (¶15), since he believes government intervention is necessary to lessen inequality. At the same time, he might quote from their final paragraph to point out possible common ground: that we must invest in education.
In “What’s Killing Poor White Women?” Monica Potts tells the story of Crystal Wilson, who died at the age of 38, to demonstrate a statistic: “white women who don’t graduate from high school . . . can now expect to die five years earlier than the generation before them” (¶7). Through Wilson’s story and other research, Potts points out that “lack of access to education, medical care, good wages, and healthy food isn’t just leaving the worst-off Americans behind. It’s killing them” (¶7). She explores each possibility, noting, for example, that we’ve known education rates affect mortality, but that they don’t “explain why the least-educated whites like Wilson are dying so much younger today than the same group was two decades ago” (¶12). She explores possible reasons for this downward trajectory and the “desperation” that causes it, while detailing the difficult life of Crystal and the legacy she leaves to her daughter Megan. At the end of the article we are left wondering whether Megan will meet a fate similar to her mother.

Teaching Notes

Before assigning the essay, you might show students the image of Crystal Wilson holding her granddaughter that Potts describes in paragraph 2 (available with the American Prospect story online as well as with her obituary on the website of Qualls Funeral Service). Have them read the obituary and analyze its portrayal of Wilson. Then, after they’ve read Potts’s essay, have them compare their initial reactions to what they learned in the essay.

Related Essays

DAVID LEONHARDT, “Inequality Has Been Going on Forever . . . but That Doesn’t Mean It’s Inevitable” [p. 542]

EDWARD MCCLELLAND, “RIP, the Middle Class: 1946-2013” [p. 549]

GARY S. BECKER AND KEVIN M. MURPHY, “The Upside of Income Inequality” [p. 581]

PEW RESEARCH CENTER, “King’s Dream Remains an Elusive Goal; Many Americans See Racial Disparities” [p. 627]

Joining the Conversation

1. Monica Potts concludes by quoting a school administrator in rural Arkansas: “The desperation of the times . . . that’s what kills them.” Based on what you’ve learned in this article, what factors might she be referring to when she talks about “desperation”?
   The factors that fuel desperation in that area include the poverty level, the small percentage of residents with college degrees, the challenge for those without degrees to
get good jobs, a lack of health care, and the cultural challenges of “low-income white communities of the South” (¶38) in which gendered expectations leave women behind.

2. This article appeared in the American Prospect, a political magazine whose editors say, “We’re liberal, progressive, lefty—call it what you want, we’re proud of it.” In what respects does Potts’s article reflect this political perspective?

In paragraph 7, Potts demonstrates her political perspective when she says, “the benefits of [technological and scientific] advances have not been shared equally, especially across the race and class divides that characterize 21st-century America.” She also reveals the assumption that women should “achieve parity with men” (¶24) and infers that Crystal should have access to better health care.

3. So what? Who cares? How does Potts show us why this topic matters? How might she make that point even more persuasively?

Through the example of Crystal Wilson, Potts shows us some of the difficulties that white women living in poverty can experience and the effects that they have on those who know those women. She also demonstrates that a number of researchers care about the topic, as well as a school administrator. Students might argue that she could present additional stakeholders in the topic, including social workers or those in the health care field.

4. How do you think Potts would respond to Radley Balko’s argument (p. 466–70) that choices about eating, lifestyle, and health are largely matters of personal responsibility and should not be considered the government’s responsibility?

Potts would point out that the circumstances in Crystal Wilson’s life meant that she didn’t have control over her own health; she didn’t have access to medical care or doctors’ advice, and her status as caregiver meant she focused more on others, less on herself. Potts’s statement in paragraph 7 would speak directly against Balko’s argument: “Lack of access to education, medical care, good wages, and healthy food isn’t just leaving the worst-off Americans behind. It’s killing them.” She would point out that those in poverty don’t have the ability to make the same choices as others, and that government programs (like Medicaid) could have helped Wilson.
Brandon King

In “The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or on Hold?” Brandon King argues that the American Dream, while changed, is still alive. He notes that the hardships of the Great Recession have made us wonder about the viability of the middle class, but he points out that today’s American Dream means something different than that of the past: rather than the rags-to-riches story, the Dream now means stable employment and housing. Because the concept of the American Dream is based on perception, King argues that the growing gap between the rich and the poor cannot impede it, and he disagrees with economists who believe that policy changes should be enacted to close the income gap. Money that goes to businesses helps drive the economy, he says, and raising taxes on the rich would be counterproductive. King concludes that “the American Dream will continue to exist as part of the American psyche, not artificially stimulated by government regulations to change income distribution” (¶9).

Teaching Notes

In the final paragraph of his essay, King aligns himself with “laissez-faire economists and Wall Street supporters.” Ask your students if they understand the principles of laissez-faire economics and to research them if they don’t. Then discuss how King’s arguments do and do not reflect this philosophy.

Related Essays

David Leonhardt, “Inequality Has Been Going on Forever . . . But That Doesn’t Mean It’s Inevitable” [p. 542]
Edward McClelland, “RIP, the Middle Class: 1946–2013” [p. 549]
Paul Krugman “Confronting Inequality” [p. 561]
Gary S. Becker and Kevin M. Murphy, “The Upside of Income Inequality” [p. 581]
Tim Roemer, “America Remains the World’s Beacon of Success” [p. 618]
Pew Research Center, “King’s Dream Remains an Elusive Goal; Many Americans See Racial Disparities” [p. 627]

Joining the Conversation

1. How does Brandon King redefine the American Dream? How does the redefinition affect his argument?

   In his first paragraph, King says, “I would redefine the American Dream today as the potential to work for an honest, secure way of life and save for the future.” He specifies that today’s American Dream is not “owning expensive items, namely cars and homes, and acquiring more material wealth” (¶2) but instead “a stable, middle-
class lifestyle” with a secure job and the ability to save. That redefinition supports his argument that anyone who works hard can still achieve the new American Dream today.

2. Summarize King’s argument in this essay. What reasons and evidence does he use to support his views? How persuasive do you find his argument?

King argues that the American Dream is still alive today but that it is different from that of the past. He also argues that inequality does not inhibit those who want to achieve the American Dream, that the wealthy create jobs, and therefore we should not tax businesses or the rich to make the Dream more possible for the poor. King uses statistics about home ownership and a survey about perceptions of the American Dream to prove his points, as well as many expert quotations. Students’ opinions of the argument’s persuasiveness will vary.

3. How does King connect the various parts of his essay? Look in particular at the beginnings and endings of paragraphs. What sorts of transitions and other connecting devices does King use? If you find places where he needs a transition or other device, supply it and explain why you think it improves the essay.

King uses some transitional phrases. For example, “despite the harshness of the Great Recession” (¶2) and “in contrast to Herbert’s bleak view” (¶8). A transition could be added to the beginning of paragraph 6, for example. A phrase connecting the previous paragraph to paragraph 6 would make the relationship between his points clearer.

4. How well does King introduce and explain Paul Krugman’s views on inequality and taxation (pp.561–80)? How thoroughly does he respond?

King addresses Krugman’s views in paragraph 4, relating them to Robert Reich’s views. After quoting Krugman, he explains the quote, pointing out that Krugman prefers government policies that reduce the income gap. King then points out common ground he has with Krugman and transitions to his disagreement. Students will have differing opinions on the adequacy of King’s explanation of Krugman’s views, but they may note that much of the rest of the essay acts as a response to ideas like those of Krugman’s. King uses other conservative thinkers to help form his response. Other students may see paragraph 4 as the only response to Krugman and see it as less than thorough.
In “America Remains the World’s Beacon of Success,” former congressman and ambassador Tim Roemer argues that despite many people’s worries and fears—“from pundits to parents” (¶1)—the United States still has numerous strengths that make the country the envy of other developing nations. He points out that yes, the unemployment rate is high and the trade deficit grows, among other economic concerns, but that all countries face challenges and we still have a strong, large economy.

Roemer also notes that Americans have access to a strong higher education system, and he lists many other advantages (paragraph 10), including “our positive demographic growth pattern.” Though the country has “real challenges,” Roemer has faith that with strong leadership and even activist movements, we will be able to achieve “a more perfect union” (¶12).

Teaching Notes
Have students visit Roemer’s Twitter feed (@Tim_Roemer) to see what subjects he discusses and what articles he links to, and discuss their overall impression of his thought process and political perspective.

Related Essays
EDWARD MCCLELLAND, “RIP the Middle Class: 1946–2013” [p. 549]
PAUL KRUGMAN, “Confronting Inequality” [p. 561]
BRANDON KING, “The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or on Hold?” [p. 610]

Joining the Conversation
1. In this article, Tim Roemer focuses primarily on the strengths and potential of the United States today. Which positive factors in particular does he emphasize, and why do you think he chooses these as opposed to other factors?

   Roemer emphasizes the country’s strong economy and GDP (¶4–5), its strong “information technology, bioscience, nanotechnology and aerospace” companies (¶6), the strength of its higher education system (¶7), government investment in industry (¶9), and several other advantages in paragraph 10. He chooses these positive factors in order to avoid discussing the United States’ weaknesses, drawing on quantitative data in addition to conversations with business leaders to support his assertions. Some students may notice that he focuses more on private industry and less on government’s strengths.
2. Roemer is careful to acknowledge some possible objections to his views. Name three objections that he mentions, and explain how he attempts to answer them.

In his second paragraph, Roemer lists several perspectives of those who are experiencing “frustration at current conditions,” including unemployment and the trade deficit. He answers these objections by pointing out that “ours is not the only country facing profound challenges” (¶3) and by demonstrating the strengths of our economy. He also notes that some feel that “our high schools need to do better” (¶7), conceding that point but arguing that our higher education system is strong and that it’s still a top destination for students around the world. He also points out that some of the worries that objectors have, “including a growing deficit, crumbling infrastructure and unsustainable entitlement spending” (¶11) are “real challenges,” but he calls for strong leadership and says that “we should be heartened, not distressed” (¶12) by activist movements.

3. What’s Roemer’s main point, and how well do you think he argues for it?

Roemer’s main point is stated clearly in the title: he believes that “America is still deeply admired around the world” and rejects the notion that “America’s greatest days are behind us” (¶1). Students’ answers to the second half of the question will vary; some will be convinced by the range of evidence he includes to support his point, and others may point out that he doesn’t account for some of the concerns other authors in this chapter have expressed, including the shrinking middle class and the lack of well-paying jobs.

4. Roemer states that he has “been appalled by the gloom of those predicting that America’s greatest days are behind us” (paragraph 1). He might have been talking about Edward McClelland, the author of “RIP, the Middle Class: 1946–2013” (pp. 549–60). Compare the arguments and evidence that each writer provides. What, if anything, do they agree about?

Although Roemer points out that the government “has invested in vital research in early phases for developing technologies” (¶9), he is unlikely to agree with McClelland’s argument that the government needs to do more through its policies to help the middle class because he wants decisions to be “made independently by individuals and individual businesses” (¶5). Students who read carefully will notice that Roemer is not a fan of “unsustainable entitlement spending” (¶11)—i.e., spending on Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. Both authors would agree that it’s a problem for Americans to be unemployed and (though McClelland doesn’t address it directly) that the education system needs to be stronger, but they would have different ideas about how to fix those problems.
In “Bring on More Immigrant Entrepreneurs,” Shayan Zadeh argues that skilled immigrants find it challenging to start businesses and work in the United States, and that as a result we are losing “skilled talent to other countries” (¶10). He tells his own life story, noting that as an Iranian, he had to hitchhike to Ankara, Turkey, in order to get the necessary visa to become a student at an American university. He faced additional challenges as he tried to start his own business in the United States and decided to work for Microsoft while he pursued citizenship. As he did so, he couldn’t change positions within the company or travel internationally for work. Zadeh did become a citizen, but he worries that others won’t make the effort and will live in other countries that “welcome[e] their expertise” (¶10). He notes that some Americans worry that “immigrants will take jobs from Americans, or drain the U.S. economy,” and he objects, noting that if illegal immigrants were given citizenship, the country would experience job growth and the economy would become stronger.

Teaching Notes
Have students visit the website of Zoosk, Zadeh’s online dating company, and read the “About Zoosk” page and the success stories about particular couples. Then, ask students what they think of the company’s image and culture.

Related Essays
EDWARD MCCLELLAND, “RIP, the Middle Class: 1946–2013” [p. 549]
GARY S. BECKER AND KEVIN M. MURPHY, “The Upside of Inequality” [p. 581]
TIM ROEMER, “America Remains the World’s Beacon of Success” [p. 618]

Joining the Conversation
1. Shayan Zadeh tells the story of how he, an immigrant to this country, was able to overcome significant obstacles, including some that resulted from U.S. laws, to become a successful entrepreneur and employer here. What’s his point, and how does the story he relates support that point?

Zadeh’s point is that other talented individuals haven’t made—and won’t make—the efforts he did, “especially when countries like Canada and United Kingdom welcome their expertise” (¶10). The story he relates emphasizes the significant challenges in obtaining the relevant visas and becoming a permanent resident and then citizen. Because he’s contributed to the U.S. economy as an immigrant entrepreneur, he acts as an example of the kind of talent the country might be missing out on.
2. This article appeared as an opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal*, a national newspaper focusing on business and the economy. Why do you think Zadeh chose to publish his piece in this particular newspaper? What are two or three ways in which the text is specifically geared for the *Wall Street Journal*’s audience?

Zadeh’s audience is clearly that of the business world. The teaser at the beginning of the essay emphasizes that he has “created 150 new jobs,” and he uses his expertise at Microsoft as well as an entrepreneur to establish credibility with that audience. Some members of this audience may be among those who “fear that immigrants will take jobs from Americans, or drain the U.S. economy” (¶10), and his particular facts about increasing the number of jobs and growing the economy might be persuasive to them. Other readers might be shepherding their own employees through the challenging visa process. Zadeh ends by emphasizing the stagnant economy, a concern for readers of the *Wall Street Journal*.

3. Most op-ed pieces are relatively short. If you were revising this one to be a longer essay, which strategies taught in this book could help? What naysayers might you include? Where would you add metacommentary? How would you say more explicitly than Zadeh does why the argument matters?

While Zadeh includes a naysayer in paragraph 11 with “we hear a lot from some quarters about the fear that immigrants will take jobs from Americans,” he could find sources that state this fear directly and give them their own paragraph before rebutting their opinions. He might also include naysayers who say that Zadeh should hire American citizens only, and a response to them would also increase the length of his piece. He could add metacommentary in those new sections, as well as in his own story to emphasize further the challenging governmental regulations that made it hard for him to become an entrepreneur. He mentions the “so what” factor when he discusses the growth of the economy, but he could add additional evidence for that point and perhaps highlight some of his “ambitious friends” whom the country has lost.

4. Tim Roemer’s op-ed (pp. 618–22) argues that this country is still viewed around the world as a land of opportunity. How does Zadeh’s piece relate to Roemer’s? How could Roemer incorporate Zadeh’s story into his own text? Write a paragraph telling Zadeh’s story as support for Roemer’s argument.

As a teenager in Iran, Zadeh was one of those individuals who saw America as a promising place to get educated—his story exemplifies Roemer’s claim, and Roemer could incorporate it into his first paragraph or into paragraph 8, when he discusses the “highly capable and legal immigrants [who] flock to our country.”
In this overview to their report on perceptions of racial equality, staff members of the Pew Research Center point out that many Americans believe there is still much to be done to achieve racial equality in the United States. On nearly every measure that the writers examine—wealth and income, the marriage rate, poverty levels, and home ownership—the gap between blacks and whites has widened or stayed the same. On a few measures, including high school completion, life expectancy, incarceration rates, and voter turnout, the gap has narrowed. In general, both blacks and whites are less likely to think that the “situation of black people is better today, compared with five years ago,” (see the figure on p. 636) and the writers note that “opinions about black progress vary considerably by educational attainment among blacks” (¶23).

**Teaching Notes**

Assign the other sections of the report—“I Have a Dream, 50 Years Later,” “Public Sees Short-Term Progress for Blacks,” and “Demographic & Economic Data, by Race,” available online—to groups of students and have them present the chapters to the class to get additional perspectives from the report.

Alternatively, if you have a racially diverse class, you could compile the questions from the questionnaire, ask the students to fill it out anonymously, and tabulate the results to see if they match the Pew Research Center’s findings or not. Have the students analyze why their particular class does or does not reflect the data in the report.

**Related Essays**

**Paul Krugman, “Confronting Inequality”** [p. 561]

**Monica Potts, “What’s Killing Poor White Women?”** [p. 591]

**Brandon King, “The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or On Hold?”** [p. 610]

**Joining the Conversation**

1. The Pew researchers examined white, black, and Hispanic Americans’ views on racial equality and then looked at what the actual economic data show on the subject. What are their main findings, and how closely do people’s perceptions appear to match the realities?

   They found that black respondents felt like they were treated less fairly by the courts and police because of their race, while the majority of whites thought that blacks were treated fairly by the courts and police. The report’s main findings are
that “the economic gulf between blacks and whites that was present half a century ago largely remains” (¶11), and that many other measures have gaps similar to those of four decades ago. A few markers, including high school completion and incarceration rate, have improved, but blacks are still incarcerated five times more often than whites, which means that the perception of black respondents does appear to match the reality.

2. The Pew Research Center describes itself as “a nonpartisan fact tank that informs the public about the issues, attitudes, and trends shaping America and the world.” What audience(s) do you think would be most interested in a report such as this one? How is the information the report provides relevant for you and for others who are not policymakers?

Students will come up with a range of audiences that might be interested, including members of the particular races that don’t have equal standing, activists, sociologists, social workers, police and the courts, and perhaps economists. Their reactions to the second question will vary: some students will feel like the report isn’t relevant to them, while others may say that it makes them more informed about how race relations and institutions affect individuals.

3. This report includes many charts to show research findings. Study one such chart and then read what the authors say to explain its findings. Which is easier to understand, the chart or the author’s explanation?

Students’ answers to this question will vary—some will find the visual representation of the chart easy to understand and even compelling; others will prefer the explanation, if they have trouble interpreting how the axes on the chart are set up.

4. Given his argument about increasing the economic disparities in the United States (pp. 561–80), how do you think Paul Krugman would interpret the results of the Pew report?

While Krugman focuses more on growing class disparities, each of his points could also apply to racial inequality, in particular the growing differences in median household income and wealth between blacks and whites, as well as the steady gap between those groups’ home ownership. He would interpret these results as further evidence that the growing gaps in equality also “strain the bonds that hold us together as a society” (¶18).
WHAT’S GENDER GOT TO DO WITH IT?

_Lean In: What Would You Do If You Weren’t Afraid?_ [p. 642]

**Sheryl Sandberg**

In this chapter from her bestselling book, _Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead_, Sheryl Sandberg argues that a “leadership ambition gap” between men and women stems from a few things: gendered expectations and cultural messages, the demands of marriage and family, and internalized perceptions that keep women from speaking up. She offers stories from her grandmother’s and mother’s lives to talk about the past but also acknowledges that “the world has not evolved nearly as much as I believed it would” (¶7). Not all women work full-time, she notes, and so businesses tend to “invest more in men, who are statistically more likely to stay” (¶7). Sandberg argues that women have the necessary skills and are even earning more bachelor’s and master’s degrees than men. However, she notes that “[t]he gender stereotypes introduced in childhood are reinforced throughout our lives and become self-fulfilling prophecies” (¶31). Sandberg also notes the need for larger societal changes because many women must work. She calls for “a paid maternity leave policy” (¶35) and says that both parents should take care of “financial and child-care responsibilities” (¶37). Sandberg concludes by demonstrating that she’s following her own advice by speaking out publicly and writing this book.

**Teaching Notes**

Sandberg first expressed the ideas behind _Lean In_ for a TED talk in 2010, which you can show students. Then, discuss how her ideas changed or stayed the same between the speech and the book.

**Related Essays**

*Bell Hooks,* “Dig Deep: Beyond _Lean In_” [p. 659]

Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All” [p. 676]

Richard Dornent, “Why Men Still Can’t Have It All” [p. 697]

Stephen Mays, “What about Gender Roles in Same-Sex Relationships?” [p. 718]

Ellen Ullman, “How to Be a ‘Woman Programmer’” [p. 726]

Saul Kaplan, “The Plight of Young Males” [p. 732]

Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet, “Learning to Be Gendered” [p. 736]
Joining the Conversation

1. Sheryl Sandberg argues that women are on the whole still raised to be less ambitious than men and that they should be encouraged to aim more for leadership roles. What evidence does she provide for this so-called “leadership ambition gap”? What factors does she say cause this gap?

   Sandberg offers various kinds of evidence, including survey results (¶12–13), an author’s analysis of a kindergarten yearbook (¶14), her own and another woman’s experiences with marriage (¶17–18), her uneasiness at being labeled bossy (¶25–26), and experiences she’s had at work. She says that women face particular obstacles to leadership, including gendered expectations that ambitious men are good, but ambitious women are “aggressive and hard-charging” (¶15). Women also often have expectations about when they should get married and have a family, and “societal explanations” also dictate what qualities men and women should have. In fact, women can end up “internaliz[ing] societal cues about what defines ‘appropriate’ behavior and, in turn, silence themselves” (¶30). The “unappealing” stereotype of a working woman in popular culture also forms women’s ideas about their own roles.

2. Sandberg mentions her grandmother, who was a successful businesswoman, as well as her mother, who dropped out of a Ph.D. program to be a “stay-at-home parent.” How do these personal details support her argument?

   Her grandmother’s experiences demonstrate the argument that society has had different expectations for boys and girls (and men and women) for a long time; though her grandmother was a strong businesswomen, she wasn’t expected to become well educated or lead others. Her mother’s story helps Sandberg prove her point that many women who pursue higher education often give up their degree or profession to be a nurturer in the family.

3. According to Sandberg, the media stereotype of a working woman is “rarely attractive” (¶33). Do you agree? Think of some examples of successful working women in movies and television. How do these examples support or contradict Sandberg’s claim?

   Students will have various answers to this question. If they struggle to think of examples of successful working women in media, consider showing clips from The Good Wife, 24, Devil Wears Prada, Erin Brockovich, Morning Glory, Ellen DeGeneres Show, etc.

4. How do you think Sandberg might respond to Saul Kaplan’s argument in “The Plight of Young Males” (pp. 732–35)?

   Sandberg would thank Kaplan for his efforts to, as he put it, “support[t] the advancement of women” and close the wage gap between men and women, but she would point out that although men struggle in educational systems, they still dominate the business world. Sandberg says that “in comparison to their male counterparts, highly trained women are scaling back and dropping out of the workforce in high numbers” (¶7).
In “Dig Deep: Beyond *Lean In,*” bell hooks argues that Sheryl Sandberg’s book falls short because it fails to account for the complexity of feminist theory, doesn’t challenge the current patriarchal system, and doesn’t consider differences in race and class.hooks characterizes Sandberg’s understanding of feminism as “simplistic” (¶4), and points out that “privileged white women often experience a greater sense of solidarity with men of their same class than with poor white women or women of color” (¶4). She also points out that Sandberg’s understanding of family is a hetero-normative one, not accounting for same-sex partnerships. In addition to its lack of understanding of differences in race, class, and sexual preference, *Lean In* doesn’t explain, according to hooks, “what men must do to unlearn sexist thinking” (¶8), and Sandberg’s call that men should participate in family and home life is nothing new. hooks also thinks that Sandberg has carefully crafted her story and personal image to deflect attention from the fact that she is “one of the richest women in the world” (¶17). Sandberg’s “trickle-down theory” that women in prominent positions will lead to success for women in lower-paying jobs is flawed, says hooks, and she argues that Sandberg’s message has succeeded because “the conservative white male-dominated world of mass media and advertising” (¶28) supported it.

**Teaching Notes**

Some students won’t understand some of bell hooks’s terms, including “hetero-normative,” “neoliberal,” and “imperialism.” Research the terms together as a class.

**Related Essays**

*Sheryl Sandberg,* “Lean In: What Would You Do If You Weren’t Afraid”  [p. 642]
*Anne-Marie Slaughter,* “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All”  [p. 676]
*Richard Dorman,* “Why Men Still Can’t Have It All”  [p. 697]
*Stephen Mays,* “What about Gender Roles in Same-Sex Relationships?”  [p. 718]
*Denis Baron,* “Facebook Multiplies Genders But Offers Users the Same Three Tired Pronouns”  [p. 721]
*Saul Kaplan,* “The Plight of Young Males”  [p. 732]

**Joining the Conversation**

1. This essay is a response to Sheryl Sandberg’s book *Lean In* (excerpted here on pp. 642–58), which encourages women to aim for positions of leadership and power. What is bell hooks’s overall assessment of that book, both positive and negative?
hooks points out that the book has “brought into public consciousness conversations about feminism” (¶1) and that Sandberg’s work does respond to “popular anti-feminist backlash, which continually suggests that the feminist push to place more women in the workforce was and is a betrayal of marriage and family” (¶10). However, she sees the book mostly in a negative light, arguing that Sandberg doesn’t understand or include the contributions of feminist theory, and thus that she doesn’t offer new solutions; that Sandberg fails to account for differences in race, class, and sexual preference; and that she doesn’t challenge the patriarchal system that creates and perpetuates the inequalities in the workplace.

2. What does hooks mean by her title, “Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In”? The subtitle tells us that the essay is about Lean In; what does “Dig Deep” add, and why do you think hooks phrased it that way?

In paragraph 14, hooks notes that she wants Sandberg to “go deeper.” She asks, “How about just explaining what she [Sandberg] means by ‘feminist manifesto,’ since the word implies ‘a full public declaration of intentions, opinions or purposes.’” In the essay’s final paragraph, hooks also says that “it is only as we place her in the overall frame of female cultural icons that we can truly unpack and understand why she has been chosen and lifted up in the neoliberal marketplace.” hooks wants readers to dig deeper than the surface of Sandberg’s argument to consider the systems she doesn’t address.

3. Even as hooks quotes and summarizes Sandberg and others, she makes her own views clear. How does she signal when she’s asserting her own views and when she’s summarizing those of someone else? (See Chapter 5 for this book’s advice on distinguishing what you say from what others say.)

hooks uses careful voice-identifying devices for signaling whether the quote will support or contradict her argument. For example, in paragraph 20, she chooses key phrases like “significantly, and unlike Sandberg,” to introduce the ideas of Emma Gilbey Keller, with whom she agrees. She makes a similar move when introducing the work of Kate Losse (¶23), which she characterizes as “an insider look at the real gender politics of Facebook,” and in paragraph 29, hooks calls Angela McRobbie “insightful” before quoting her. In contrast, when she introduces a Sandberg quote in paragraph 13, hooks uses the phrases “convenient lies” and “assertions.”

4. According to hooks, “Sandberg uses feminist rhetoric as a front to cover her commitment to western cultural imperialism, to white-supremacist capitalist patriarchy” (paragraph 29). What exactly does she mean by these criticisms? How do you think Sandberg would respond to these charges?
hooks means that Sandberg employs key words and ideas associated with feminism but doesn’t confront the societal patterns that tend to support Western white straight men with great wealth. Sandberg’s lack of attention to race, class, and sexual preference, as well as her support of a global capitalism that helps the wealthy but not others, make her argument weaker, according to hooks. Sandberg would point out that she acknowledges that “most women have no choice but to remain in the workforce,” especially single mothers, whose “numbers are dramatically higher in Hispanic and African-American families” (¶34).
In “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All,” Anne-Marie Slaughter argues that women can’t “have it all” today, “not with the way America’s economy and society are currently structured” (¶8). She offers her own resignation from a prominent State Department position as example of the challenges facing mothers in demanding careers. Slaughter notes that flexible scheduling makes it more possible to balance work and home life, but that ‘it’s still a great challenge. She wants “top women” to speak out (¶13), and she disagrees with Sheryl Sandberg’s call to women to “lean in” because “we who have made it to the top . . . are essentially saying to the women in the generation behind us: ‘What’s the matter with you?’” (¶15). Slaughter acknowledges that her arguments are often focused on “highly educated, well-off women who are privileged enough to have choices in the first place” (¶19), but she thinks that if we eliminated “the leadership gap” and had a woman president and a Congress with 50 percent women, change would come. She also argues that we should value parenting and share family references in our work lives. In fact, Slaughter says, if life were balanced for women, it would be for men as well. More time for family leave and flexible schedules would enable creative thinking and productivity.

Teaching Notes
In the first paragraph of her essay, Anne-Marie Slaughter mentions George Kennan, who served in several positions in the State Department during and after World War II, including as the Cold War developed. Kennan was the first director of policy planning when that position was created in 1947.

Related Essays
BELL HOOKS, “Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In”  [p. 659]
RICHARD DORMENT, “Why Men Still Can’t Have It All”  [p. 697]
ELLEN ULLMAN, “How to Be a ‘Woman Programmer’”  [p. 726]

Joining the Conversation
1. According to Anne-Marie Slaughter, women can “‘have it all.’ . . . But not today, not with the way America’s economy and society are currently structured” (paragraph 8). Summarize her “I say,” noting the reasons and evidence she gives to support her claims.
   Slaughter argues that women can’t have it all because of the way the business world is structured. She points out that flexible scheduling and better family leave
policies would make employees happier and more productive, and she offers both personal anecdotes and evidence from surveys to support that reason. She also argues for having more women in top policy-making positions, as president and in Congress, though she doesn’t offer specific evidence for that reason. To support her major claim, that women can’t have it all, Slaughter includes a wide array of evidence, including personal anecdotes, conversations with younger women, and research from economists and sociologists.

2. In paragraph 19, Slaughter entertains a possible objection to her argument, saying that she is “well aware that a majority of American women face problems far greater than any discussed in this article.” How does she answer this objection?

Slaughter concedes this point, arguing that “millions of other working women face much more difficult life circumstances” (¶20), but saying that “the best hope for improving the lot of all women” is “to close the leadership gap: to elect a woman president and 50 women senators” (¶21), etc.

3. This essay consists of four sections: Redefining the Arc of a Successful Career, Rediscovering the Pursuit of Happiness, Innovation Nation, and Enlisting Men. Summarize each section in a sentence or two. Put yourself in Slaughter’s shoes; your summary should be true to what she says. (See pp. 31–33 for guidance in writing this kind of summary.)

In “Redefining the Arc of a Successful Career,” Slaughter argues that even as she redefined what she wanted to do in her career, she saw younger women acknowledging the challenges of being successful with both work and family. She doesn’t want women to feel guilty for the choices they make, and she warns that women leaders might be preserving the notion that they can do it all.

In “Rediscovering the Pursuit of Happiness,” Slaughter says that women leaders should challenge the idea that work should exclude any thought of family life. She sees her parenting as something of great importance and value, and she notes that some families have decided to focus on their personal happiness instead of success in their careers.

In “Innovation Nation,” Slaughter tells companies that they won’t lose money if they create innovative work environments with flexible schedules; studies show family-friendly policies lead to productive employees and creative thought.

In “Enlisting Men,” Slaughter notes that men, too, are thinking about the work-life balance. Men contribute to family and home life more than in the past, and women should frame their arguments in terms that explain how they would benefit men as well.
Slaughter claims that most young men today have not yet had to decide between accepting a promotion or other professional opportunity and delaying their own goals “to spend more time with their children and to support their partner’s career” (paragraph 42). What would Richard Dorment (pp. 697–717) say to that?

Dorment would likely disagree. He points out that men spend more time on childcare and cooking than in the past, and he quotes a researcher who says that “men want a different relationship with their children than men have had in the past” (¶24). In fact, he says, Slaughter’s own husband made the kinds of choices she’s describing.
In “Why Men Still Can’t Have It All,” Richard Dorment responds to Sheryl Sandberg and Anne-Marie Slaughter, arguing that men make many sacrifices and experience more stress than women as they try to balance work and home. He points out that women have many advantages, including a higher percentage of college degrees, and he criticizes Slaughter’s essay for relying “on personal anecdotes mixed with wonk talk” (¶4). He worries that Slaughter and Sandberg are blaming men for “pretty much everything” (¶7), when men actually contribute more at home than they did decades ago. If women do more chores, we should consider a wide array of reasons for that, Dorment says, and he points out that fatherhood matters deeply to men. Dorment concludes that “getting to the top is really, really hard” (¶42), and he recommends that if people don’t want to “make unacceptable sacrifices (¶42), they should find less demanding jobs. “We are all equals here,” he says.

**Teaching Notes**

Have students visit *Esquire’s* media kit online to learn more about the readership of that publication, in preparation for study question number 3.

**Related Essays**

*Anne-Marie Slaughter, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All”* [p. 676]

**Joining the Conversation**

1. Why, in Richard Dorment’s view, can men still not “have it all”? What in particular does he mean by “it all,” and what evidence does he provide to support his position?

   Dorment says men can’t have it all because they too make sacrifices as they choose between work and family, and they “report higher rates of work-life stress than women do” (¶8). Even when they contribute at home, men are told they aren’t doing enough or aren’t doing tasks correctly, and he points out that men do want to be involved in their children’s lives even though work demands make that challenging. Dorment mocks the tendency not to explain what “it” is in paragraph 4: “The ‘it’ in question being like Potter Stewart’s definition of pornography: You know it when you have it.” He does acknowledge, though, that the understanding of “it” tends to be “work-life balance.” Dorment’s evidence includes results from a Pew Research Center
study, the work of Ellen Galinsky and others, and an interview with Dave Goldberg, husband of Sheryl Sandberg. He also includes anecdotes from his own life.

2. This article is a response to Anne-Marie Slaughter’s “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All” (pp. 676–96), and Dorment summarizes and quotes from that piece extensively. How fairly do you think he represents Slaughter’s views? Cite specific examples from his article in your answer.

Some students will say that he represents her views fairly, but with a strongly critical tone. For example, he says that the piece “relies on personal anecdotes mixed with wonk talk” (¶4). Others will feel that Dorment mischaracterizes Slaughter’s main claims and might say that she doesn’t blame men specifically so much as the way many jobs are designed. They might feel that he starts to attack her personally when he notes that her viewpoint “comes from a person whose husband, by her own admission, sacrificed much in his own academic career to do the heavy lifting with their children, all so she could pursue her dream job and then complain about it, bitterly, in the pages of a national magazine” (¶23).

3. Dorment published this article in Esquire, which calls itself “the magazine for men.” How can you tell that he has written his article primarily for a male audience? How might he revise the article, keeping the same basic argument, to appeal to an audience of women?

In addition to the mix of formal and informal language in the piece (see question 5), Dorment’s focus on what he sees as an anti-men theme in pieces like Slaughter’s would appeal to the audience for Esquire. He also recounts anecdotes from his personal life—when his wife refolds the laundry he’s folded, and when he felt “left out” (¶32) during the first weeks of his son’s life—that other men might relate to. To appeal to an audience of women, Dorment might consider choosing different examples than the ones just mentioned, but some students will say that he does try to find common ground with women, in statements like, “isn’t this what feminism was supposed to be about? . . . [T]o give each of us, men and women, access to the same array of choices and then the ability to choose for ourselves?” (¶40). Additional focus on common ground would help him appeal to women.

4. Since this question is a writing prompt for students, an answer isn’t provided.

5. Dorment’s writing is quite informal—colorful and in places even irreverent. How does this informality suit his audience and purpose? How does it affect your response? Choose a paragraph in his article and dress it up, rewriting it in more formal, academic language. Which version do you find more appealing, and why?

Students who look at the media kit for the magazine will note that the audience for Esquire is not only men but men of a certain age: the biggest percentage of their
readership is between 25 and 49. They will note that Dorment appeals to this group through slang (like “the big mo!” in paragraph 2), informal quotes from others (like in paragraph 16), and commentary, for example, when he discusses his wife’s tendency to refold laundry he’s already folded, he says, “This used to annoy me—why do I even bother? or, conversely, Is this the Army?” (¶21). For some students, the informality will increase their interest in what he has to say, but others may be turned off by it. Good paragraphs to use for the exercise are paragraph 21 or paragraph 30.
What about Gender Roles in Same-Sex Relationships?  [p. 718]

Stephen Mays

In “What about Gender Roles in Same-Sex Relationships?” Stephen Mays argues that all people, whether gay or straight, have both masculine and feminine qualities, and that we shouldn’t try to conceptualize the people in same-sex couples through the lens of gendered stereotypes. He describes once hearing someone ask “Who do you think is the girl in the relationship?” about a gay male couple. In his op-ed, he takes the opportunity to respond by saying that “They’re both boys” (¶1). He acknowledges that “traditional ideas of gender roles” might impact a gay relationship, but he thinks that there’s a “more leveled playing field” (¶3). Since there are few “gender-neutral” characteristics, he hopes that we can acknowledge instead that everyone “comprises many characteristics” (¶5).

Teaching Notes

Have students visit The Red & Black editorial page (www.redandblack.com/views) to see what elements the genre of an editorial tends to have. Consider having them write an imitation of Mays’s piece in which they respond to a comment they’ve overheard on campus.

Related Essays

Bell Hooks, “Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In”  [p. 659]
Dennis Baron, “Facebook Multiplies Genders But Offers Users the Same Three Tired Pronouns”  [p. 721]
Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet, “Learning to Be Gendered”  [p. 736]

Joining the Conversation

1. Stephen Mays begins by literally quoting what someone said, which he then uses as a way to launch what he says in response. He could have summarized what was said; why do you think he quoted it instead? What argument does he offer in response?

   Mays quoted it directly because it is a provocative statement that might be diluted in paraphrase. As Chapter 3 notes, “quotations function as a kind of proof of evidence, saying to readers, ‘Look, I’m not just making this up. She makes this claim and here it is in her exact words.’” In response to the girl’s question about which of the men in a couple was “the girl,” Mays responds, “Neither of them is the girl. They’re both boys.”

2. Mays obviously cares a lot about this topic, but does he explain why we should care? If not, do it for him. Write a paragraph—perhaps it could be a new concluding
paragraph—discussing explicitly why this topic matters and who should care. (See Chapter 7 for guidance.)

Mays omits a “so what” factor; he could emphasize one by pointing out that questions like the one he’s overheard might also lead to discrimination based on sexual preference, because the girl or others like her don’t understand how same-sex relationships work and might be making unfair assumptions. He might also point out that labeling things as “masculine” and “feminine” may harm those of the opposite gender who possess those characteristics, or even analyze why “feminine” characteristics are often denigrated in men and what that reveals about our gendered society. Stakeholders in this discussion include everyone—those who consider themselves heterosexual, the LGBT community, and generally anyone who might defy traditional gender stereotypes by virtue of their behavior, personality, and so on.

3. This short piece was written as a newspaper column. What strategies in this book could Mays use to revise his article as an academic essay? (See the tips in Chapter 11 for using the templates to revise.)

To expand this piece and change it to an academic essay, Mays would need to do additional research and incorporate the views of others—he would need to document those quotations, and agree, disagree, or both with each of his quotes or paraphrases. He might also offer additional reasons and evidence, introduce naysayers, include metacommentary, and show why his argument matters.

4. Read Eckert and McConnell-Ginet’s essay (pp. 736–46) on the ways that society inscribes and enforces gender distinctions. How does their argument relate to Mays’s views on gender roles in same-sex relationships?

If Eckert and McConnell-Ginet read Mays’s piece, they would argue that the girl wondered who was the “girl in the relationship” because she’d been socialized to expect that girls have certain characteristics, and boys have others. Though they discuss younger children, they would say that Mays’s experience demonstrates the eventual outcome of learning to perform a gender and judging others who may stray from gendered expectations in adult relationships.
In “Facebook Multiplies Genders But Offers Users the Same Three Tired Pronouns,” Dennis Baron points out that Facebook’s new policy offers users 58 gender choices but only three pronoun options: he, she, and they. He praises Facebook for its “fluid” (¶3) thinking about gender but says they seem to think that “gender may be socially constructed, but grammar is sacred” (¶3). In fact, Baron notes that those interested in grammar have “proposed new pronouns to fill linguistic gaps” (¶5) over the years, including an eighteenth-century Scottish grammarian who wanted to create more than 234 new pronouns in English. Baron lists another fifty-five gender-neutral pronouns created over the last two and a half centuries, and implicitly encourages Facebook to adopt them.

Teaching Notes

Have students read additional blog posts from Baron’s website (http://illinois.edu/blog/view/25) and write summaries of his viewpoints on other topics to get a full sense of his life as a thinker.

As a class, visit Facebook and see what the current options for gender (and other categories) are.

Related Essays

BELL HOOKS, “Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In” [p. 659]
STEPHEN MAYS, “What About Gender Roles in Same-Sex Relationships?” [p. 718]

Joining the Conversation

1. Why, according to Dennis Baron, does Facebook now provide a list of fifty-eight terms for gender but still limit its use of pronouns to three?

   Baron offers what he thinks of as Facebook’s thinking: that “gender may be socially constructed, but grammar is sacred” (¶3). He also worries that “when it comes to grammar, their thinking rigidifies into masculine, feminine, and neuter” (¶3).

2. This piece was written for Baron’s blog, The Web of Language, a “go-to site for language and technology in the news” followed by linguists and others interested in those topics. With that context in mind, what do you think his point is? How can you tell?
His point is that we should listen to grammarians and offer more than three personal pronouns. He uses examples from James Anderson and other grammarians to support this point.

3. Baron quotes and discusses a proposal by an eighteenth-century Scottish grammarian to add many new pronouns to the English language. What does this example add to Baron’s argument?

This example may surprise readers who didn’t know that linguists and grammarians have been thinking about the issue of pronouns in the English language for more than 150 years. It’s a surprising piece of research that helps support his argument that we should be able to have more than three personal pronouns.

4. Read “Learning to Be Gendered,” by Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet (pp. 736–46). What do you think Eckert and McConnell-Ginet would have to say about Facebook’s policy on gender terms?

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet would likely support Baron’s argument. They argue that we learn how to perform our gender as children, based on adults’ and other children’s expectations, and they note that even the act of naming sets up that the child is one gender or another: “These early linguistic acts set up a baby for life, launching a gradual process of learning to be a boy or a girl, a man or a woman, and to see all others as boys or girls, men or women as well” (¶2). Though they would be fans of Facebook’s decision to list many genders, they would likely agree with Baron that we need other “ways to think about ourselves and others” (Eckert and McConnell, ¶2) when it comes to pronouns. In their own essay, when they refer to individual children, they use “it” instead of “he” or “she.”
In “How to Be a ‘Woman Programmer,’” Ellen Ullman argues that in the field of computer engineering, women face both overt and covert forms of sexism. She relates stories of her own experiences with prejudiced bosses and clients. Though she says that women who want to be programmers need “a passion for the work” and “a high tolerance for failure” (¶4–5), she also notes that they need to figure out how to navigate an industry dominated by men. This imbalance matters because venture capitalists tend to invest more in men, and women’s “ranks thin at the deeper technical levels” (¶14). Ullman thinks that we can work against sexism through “the rule of law and social activism” (¶15), but she thinks that it will be difficult to change the system. She tells younger women that they can “lash back” or resign if they face challenges related to their gender, but she urges them to focus on the work itself. She concludes: “Staring prejudice in the face imposes a cruel discipline: to structure your anger, to achieve a certain dignity, an angry dignity” (¶18).

Teaching Notes
If you’d like students to get a better sense of Ullman and her background, you can have them read the interview with her on Ubiquity (http://ubiquity.acm.org/article.cfm?id=782791). You might also consider visiting code.org, the website of a non-profit that encourages women and students of color to learn computer science.

Ask your students how many of them know how to code, or how many of them would like to learn. Education experts have advocated that all students learn code, even at young ages. What do your students think of that position?

Related Essays
ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All” [p. 676]

Joining the Conversation
1. In the first two paragraphs of this essay, Ellen Ullman characterizes her accomplishments as a programmer as “ordinary” and says that what most distinguished her was the fact that she was “a woman programmer.” How does she assess the nature of opportunities for women in the programming world? What impediments does she say still exist? What advice does she offer for women interested in going into that field?

Although Ullman discusses her experiences in the 1980s and 1990s, she says that “women today face a new, more virile and virulent sexism” (¶13). She notes that they struggle to get funding from venture capitalists and have difficulty rising up to higher
levels in tech companies. She says, "I have no guidance for women who want to rise through the ranks into technical management" (¶16), but she does advise all women to “lash back” if they need to, or to quit (¶17). She also recommends focusing on “the love of the work” (¶18).

2. According to Ullman, women today “face a new, more virile and virulent sexism” (paragraph 13). What does she mean by this strong claim, and what evidence does she provide to support it? What other supporting points might strengthen her argument?

   Ullman notes that women are unable to create startups because they can’t get funding from venture capitalists, and because women are “underrepresented” in startups (¶14). She doesn’t offer specific evidence for the first point, but she shares an anecdote from another woman who was one of four women in a 24-person company, which is “considered a good ratio” (¶14). Other supporting points might address whether there is a pay gap between men and women in the tech industry, whether women with families face additional challenges, or whether women still face the overt sexism Ullman experienced early in her career.

3. Ullman does not include any viewpoints other than her own. How might adding other perspectives, even those of naysayers, improve her argument? Name two or three objections she might have considered.

   Students who have read Chapter 6 will know that including a naysayer enhances an author’s credibility, shows respect for readers, and helps fully develop an argument. Ullman might have considered these objections: women are more represented in the field of computer programming now than ever before; programs for young women are encouraging them to enter science and technology fields; and men are obtaining fewer and fewer college degrees, which may lead to fewer of them in high-tech fields in the future.

4. This op-ed was written shortly after the publication of Sheryl Sandberg’s Lean In, a best-seller that encourages women to aim for leadership positions. In paragraph 9, when Ullman writes about “leaning to one side” rather than confronting a “flawed” boss, do you think she was referring to that book (excerpted here on pp. 642–58)? How do you think Ullman might respond to Sandberg’s advice, with regard to the field of programming, and what might Sandberg say to Ullman?

   Ullman was likely referring to Sandberg’s book, and she uses the reference to “lean” more than once. Ullman might say to Sandberg that her actions, which avoided confrontation, allowed her to learn a lot about the actual work she does. She could also note that the issues in her field don’t necessarily center around a desire for work/life balance for women with families, but that the culture itself doesn’t make room for women. Finally, Ullman might say that it doesn’t matter if women lean in, if the male
venture capitalists aren’t willing to invest in them. Sandberg would have urged Ullman not to be afraid to confront the inappropriate comment, to take a risk, and to try to lead instead of moving to a different company when a project is complete. She would praise Ullman for “find[ing] something you love doing and . . . do[ing] it with gusto” (¶42).

5. This essay appeared in the New York Times. How would you advise Ullman to revise her text to make the same basic argument to an audience of undergraduate computer science majors, both men and women? Make a list of ways you think she could better appeal to such an audience.

Students might say that Ullman could directly address younger men and women by urging those entering the field to work for fair treatment for all programmers and offering specific examples of actions they could take in the workplace. She could also encourage young women to enter this line of work by pointing out the things she loves about it, citing additional examples from her own or others’ experiences.
The Plight of Young Males  [p. 732]

Saul Kaplan

In “The Plight of Young Males,” Saul Kaplan argues that there is a growing educational gap between men and women and that we should change the educational system to help boys be successful. He notes that the business world needs to improve its treatment of women, but he wonders why people think that paying attention to the struggles of boys “would come at the expense of celebrating and enabling continued achievement of girls” (¶3). As he points out, this argument matters because it has economic consequences: in the past men without college degrees could get well-paying manufacturing jobs; now, however, a college degree is necessary “for anyone hoping to make a decent living” (¶7). Men were hit particularly hard by the recession, and “young men of color” (¶9) rarely receive even an associate's degree. Kaplan’s solution is to transform the “education system from a one-size-fits-all pipeline . . . to an individualized approach where every student can find his or her own pathway” (¶10).

Teaching Notes

Have students read Kaplan’s blog to see what his recent concerns are and how they relate to this particular argument.

The College Board has an extensive website about their project together: https://youngmenofcolor.collegeboard.org/student-experiences.

Related Essays

Bell Hooks, “Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In” [p. 659]
Richard Dorman, “Why Men Still Can’t Have It All” [p. 697]

from Chapter 19:
Edward McClelland, “RIP, the Middle Class: 1946–2013” [p. 549]

Joining the Conversation

1. What exactly is Saul Kaplan arguing in this essay, and what evidence does he provide to support his argument? What are his credentials for making this argument?

Kaplan argues that men are falling behind in the education system. He cites census data on college degrees and earnings, quotes the author of a book on young men, gives facts about high school boys’ poor writing skills, includes statistics about the recession, and points out that small percentages of men of color receive college degrees. His think tank, the Business Innovation Factory, has been “working with the College Board to explore the experience of young men of color in the United States” (¶9).
2. When Kaplan posted this article on the *Harvard Business Review* blog, he included a link to the Business Innovation Factory website so that readers could learn more about what the company has been doing “to turn these disturbing trends around” (paragraph 9). Why do you think Kaplan chose this venue for publication? What has motivated him to write this article?

Kaplan chose this venue to make members of the business community aware of the difficulties young men are facing, but there might be other reasons. In one sense, the link he provides serves to promote his company, and in this way it’s a kind of advertisement for his work. He likely hopes to get other readers of the blog, members of the business community, to contribute to his project, start similar projects of their own, or advocate to lawmakers about other changes. He was motivated to write this article because “a growing education attainment gap has profound consequences for the economy” (¶6).

3. Kaplan cares about the future of young men, but does he convince you that you should care as well? Why, or why not? What, if anything, might he add or change to make his point more powerfully?

Male students in the class may be easily convinced of the “so what” factor because of their own or their friends’ experiences. All students may be convinced by Kaplan’s arguments that the educational achievement gap between men and women has profound economic consequences for everyone. Some students may point out that he could appeal specifically to women to let them know why the issue should matter to them: because they are related to or in relationships with men who might struggle, because their male children might struggle in the future, or because a more educated population benefits everyone in particular ways.

4. Like Kaplan, Edward McClelland (pp. 549–60) laments the dramatic loss of industrial jobs that do not require a college degree—but he discusses the effects of these job losses on both men and women. Consider both arguments. Which one do you find more persuasive, and why?

Students’ opinions will vary. Some will find Kaplan’s statistics about the differences in educational achievement convincing, and others will agree with McClelland that government policies made the job losses worse. They may note that McClelland offers specific solutions he hopes the government will put into place, while Kaplan is more general about his desire to change the educational system.
In “Learning to Be Gendered,” Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet argue that gender isn’t inherent but is something we learn to perform: “Being a girl or being a boy is not a stable state but an ongoing accomplishment, something that is actively done both by the individual so categorized and by those who interact with it” (¶3). Gender, then, is a collaboration between the person and those around him or her. The authors argue that adults perceive babies differently based on the baby’s sex, and they speak differently to children of different genders, regardless of the child’s actual behavior. As a result, children are conditioned to be different; for example boys will cry less and girls will talk more. Other scholars think that adults might treat children more similarly, but the authors respond that the methodology of those studies doesn’t account for a child’s experiences in multiple settings. Another point of view, that these differences stem from biology, fails to account for the ways in which the “divergence is supported and exaggerated by the social system” (¶12).

Teaching Notes
Eckert and McConnell-Ginet cite Judith Butler early in their essay; ask students to research Butler’s work on gender and performance, and analyze how it may have influenced this essay.

Ask students to compare this APA-style essay to essays that use MLA style (e.g., Mary Maxfield’s “Food as Thought: Resisting the Moralization of Eating” or Michaela Cullington’s “Does Texting Affect Writing?”), Chicago style (e.g., Paul Krugman’s “Confronting Inequality”), and those that use no citation methods. How do sources get treated differently in each approach?

Related Essays
STEPHEN MAYS, “What about Gender Roles in Same-Sex Relationships?” [p. 718]
DENNIS BARON, “Facebook Multiplies Genders But Offers Users the Same Three Tired Pronouns” [p. 721]

Joining the Conversation
1. This selection opens by saying that women “are not born, they are made”—and that “the same is true for men.” How, according to Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet, does language contribute to our gender identities, and what evidence do they provide to support their argument?
Eckert and McConnell-Ginet point out that naming a child contributes to its gender; they provide evidence from Finland about official lists and state that “English names are gendered” (¶1). Adults also talk to children differently based on their genders. Eckert and McConnell-Ginet cite evidence from three other research studies to prove this point. They also argue that children learn to talk in different ways based on the reactions of adults, and again, they offer evidence from two other studies to prove this point.

2. The authors start by quoting Simone de Beauvoir. How do they then frame the quotation? In other words, how do they explain whose words these are, what the quotation means, and how it relates to their own text?

In a signal phrase before the quote, the authors say “In the famous words of Simone de Beauvoir,” though they don’t explain who she is, assuming that their audience will know. (The footnote that appears on p. 736 was added by the editors of They Say.) After the quote, they say they agree, but say her words also apply to men. This leads them to their main argument that “The making of a man or a woman is a never-ending process that begins before birth” (¶1).

3. Notice how these authors handle gender references in their own writing: they don’t use “he” to refer to both males and females, nor do they use the often awkward “he or she.” What do they do instead? Cite some specific examples from their text in your answer.

The authors refer to the people they discuss in plural terms—“children” or “girls and boys”—and when they talk about individuals, especially children, they often use “its.” For example, they say that “the newborn initially depends on others to do its gender” (¶3).

4. Read the short op-ed by Stephen Mays on pp. 718–20. How do you think Mays would respond to this piece on learning to be gendered?

Mays would likely agree that gender is learned. He notes that “We simply associate certain actions with very classic ideas of masculinity or femininity. There are few actions or characteristics that classify as gender-neutral” (¶4). He would also argue that we should fight against those expectations when we’re old enough to understand, because each of us has both “masculine” and “feminine” characteristics.
SAMPLE SYLLABUS #1

This syllabus, created for a 16-week course, highlights the rhetorical moves students will learn using this book. The reading load is heavier at the beginning of the term, and the first few weeks include smaller writing assignments so that students practice the skills of summarizing, quoting, and responding on a smaller scale before beginning the four major writing assignments. Towards the end of the term, they will focus on their own writing, especially the final, longer assignment. All of the in-class activities may not be possible, but this syllabus gives an idea of which activities would work well with each week’s readings.

WEEK ONE

Read  Chapter 12 (“I Take Your Point”: Entering Class Discussions)
       Chapter 1 (“They Say”: Starting with What Others Are Saying)
       NICHOLAS CARR, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” [p. 313]

Write Answer Carr “Joining the Conversation” questions 1–4 [p. 328]

In-class Activities
       “Using Framing in a Discussion” from Additional Activities
       Exercise 1 from Chapter 1 [p. 28]
       “Identifying What ‘They Say’” from Additional Activities

WEEK TWO

Read  Chapter 14 (“What’s Motivating This Writer?”: Reading for the Conversation)
       Chapter 2 (“Her Point Is”: The Art of Summarizing)
       DAVID ZINCZENKO, “Don’t Blame the Eater” [p. 462]

Write Write a summary of Zinczenko’s essay

In-class Activities
       Exercises 1 and 2 from Chapter 2 [p. 40]
       “Summary Writing and Review” from Additional Activities

WEEK THREE

Read  Chapter 4 (“Yes / No / Okay, But”: Three Ways to Respond)
       RADLEY BALKO, “What You Eat Is Your Business” [p. 466]
       DAVID H. FREEDMAN, “How Junk Food Can End Obesity” [p. 506]

Write Write a summary of and response to Balko’s essay
In-class Activities

“A Local Issues Argument” and “An Argument Circle” from Additional Activities

WEEK FOUR

Read

Chapter 3 (“As He Himself Puts It”: The Art of Quoting)

MICHAEL POLLAN, “Escape from the Western Diet” [p. 420]

MARY MAXFIELD, “Food as Thought: Resisting the Moralization of Eating” [p. 442]

Write

Write first draft of Assignment 1

In-class Activities

Exercises 1 and 2 from Chapter 3 [p. 50]

“Making a Quotation Sandwich” or “When Part of the Sandwich Is Missing” from Additional Activities

WEEK FIVE

Read

Chapter 5 (“And Yet”: Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say)


BELL HOOKS, “Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In” [p. 659]

Write

Assignment 1 due

In-class Activities

Exercises 1 and 2 from Chapter 5 [p. 75]

“Evaluating Use of the First Person” and “Recasting Point of View” from Additional Activities

WEEK SIX

Read

Chapter 6 (“Skeptics May Object”: Planting a Naysayer in Your Text)

ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All” [p. 676]

RICHARD DORMENT, “Why Men Still Can’t Have It All” [p. 697]

Write

Answer “Joining the Conversation” question 5 after the Slaughter essay [p. 696] or “Joining the Conversation” question 4 after the Dorment essay [p. 717]

In-class Activities

Exercise 2 in Chapter 6 [p. 91]

“Playing the Role of the Naysayer” and “That’s Just Wrong” in Additional Activities
WEEK SEVEN
Read  Chapter 7 (“So What? Who Cares?": Saying Why It Matters)

CHARLES MURRAY, “Are Too Many People Going to College?” [p. 234]


Write  Write first draft of Assignment 2

In-class Activities

   Exercise 2 in Chapter 7 [p. 101]
   “Asking and Answering the ‘So What?’ and ‘Who Cares?’” and “Role-playing
   the One Who Cares” in Additional Activities

WEEK EIGHT
Read  Chapter 8 (“As a Result”: Connecting the Parts)

PAUL KRUGMAN, “Confronting Inequality” [p. 561]

BRANDON KING, “The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or on Hold?” [p. 610]

Write  Assignment 2 due

In-class Activities

   Exercise 1 from Chapter 8 [p. 119]
   “Between Paragraphs / Within Paragraphs” in Additional Activities

WEEK NINE
Read  Chapter 9 (“Ain’t So / Is Not”: Academic Writing Doesn’t Always Mean
       Setting Aside Your Own Voice)

LIZ ADDISON, “Two Years Are Better than Four” [p. 255]

MICHELLE OBAMA, “Bowie State University Commencement Speech” [p. 285]

Write  Find two sources for Assignment 3 and write one page on how they
       address the conversation/topic you’re exploring for Assignment 3

In-class Activities

   Instruction on research, library databases, and good Internet searches
   “Two Sample Essays” in Additional Activities
   Exercises 1 and 2 in Chapter 9 [p. 128]

WEEK TEN
Read  Chapter 10 (“But Don’t Get Me Wrong”: The Art of Metacommentary)

Chapter 13 (“IMHO”: Is Digital Communication Good or Bad—or Both?)

GERALD GRAFF, “Hidden Intellectualism” [p. 264]
Write  Assignment 3 draft due

In-class Activities

   Exercise 1 in Chapter 10  [p. 137]
   “A Metacommentary Exchange” in Additional Activities
   “Putting the Readings into the Conversation” and “Before and After Debates” from Additional Activities

WEEK ELEVEN
Read  JENNA WORTHAM, “I Had a Nice Time with You Tonight. On the App” [p. 393]
Write  Assignment 3 due
In-class Activities
   “Titles Workshop” in Additional Activities

WEEK TWELVE
Read  Chapter 15 ("Analyze This": Writing in the Social Sciences)
Write  Proposal for Assignment 4 due
In-class Activities
   Discuss research and interpretation in the disciplines. Have students bring in a piece of writing from their discipline and analyze it, as Ackerman has.

WEEK THIRTEEN
Read  Review Chapter 4
Write  Working Argument due
In-class Activities
   Idea workshop. As a class, discuss each student’s working argument, offering suggestions for the project.

WEEK FOURTEEN
Read  Review Chapter 2, Chapter 3, and Chapter 8
Write  Source Analysis due
In-class Activities
   Any of the book exercises or additional activities in the instructor’s manual that address summarizing, quotation, and transitions.

WEEK FIFTEEN
Read  Review Chapter 6 and Chapter 7
Write  Assignment 4 draft due
In-class Activities

Any of the book exercises or additional activities in the instructor’s notes that address naysayers and the “so what?” factor.

WEEK SIXTEEN

Read  Chapter 11 ("He Says Contends": Using the Templates to Revise)

Write  Assignment 4 due

In-class Activities

“Checklists in Action” from Additional Activities

ASSIGMENTS

The assignments below work well in a semester-length term, but for a quarter-length term, you could omit or shorten the third assignment. The assignments build on each other: the first asks students to summarize and respond to a single essay, while the second asks them to summarize two related essays and then enter the conversation found in the two essays. The third assignment, a bridge to the longer, self-initiated final project, asks students to describe a larger conversation (i.e., involving more than two viewpoints) in either their field or their community (or perhaps in response to more than two essays in the book). The final assignment, a culminating piece, uses their own research to support an argument related to the conversation they describe in the third assignment.

Assignment 1: Summarizing, Quoting, Responding (3 pages)

Choose one of the essays that we’ve read and discussed as a class (listed below), and write an extended summary of the essay (“they say”) as well as your response to the arguments made (“I say”). You can use additional essays as support for your own ideas, but you should construct your own argument in response to one particular author. If you use quotes, make sure you “sandwich” them, as described in Chapter 3.

NICHOLAS CARR, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” [p. 313]

DAVID ZINCHENKO, “Don’t Blame the Eater” [p. 462]

RADLEY BALKO, “What You Eat Is Your Business” [p. 466]

DAVID H. FREEDMAN, “How Junk Food Can End Obesity” [p. 506]

MICHAEL POLLAN, “Escape from the Western Diet” [p. 420]

MARY MAXFIELD, “Food as Thought: Resisting the Moralization of Eating” [p. 442]

(Alternatively, you could assign one of the essays from the food chapter that students haven’t read together as a class.)
Assignment 2: Entering a Conversation (4 pages)

Choose one of the sets of essays listed below. Summarize both of the arguments ("they say"), explain how the authors agree and disagree, and craft your own response to the issues the two essays raise ("I say"). Make sure you include a naysayer to show possible objections to your argument, and address the “so what?” factor: why does this issue matter?

BELL HOOKS, “Dig Deep: Beyond Lean In” [p. 659]

ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER, “Why Women Still Can’t Have It All” [p. 676]
RICHARD DORMENT, “Why Men Still Can’t Have It All” [p. 697]

CHARLES MURRAY, “Are Too Many People Going to College?” [p. 234]

PAUL KRUGMAN, “Confronting Inequality” [p. 561]
BRANDON KING, “The American Dream: Dead, Alive, or on Hold” [p. 610]

Assignment 3: Describing a Larger Conversation (4 pages)

Option 1: Pick an issue affecting your future career field, your major field, or your community. Write a paper that explains various perspectives on this issue, addressing at least three different sources (published texts, interviews, etc.) and no more than five sources. Rather than presenting the issue as having two sides (those for or against something), explain more than two points of view, showing the complexity of the issue. At some point in the paper, take your own stand, but the majority of the paper should explain the larger conversation surrounding the issue.

Option 2: Pick an issue described in the readings you’ve done from the book (who or what is to blame for unhealthy eating, whether women or men face more challenges with work/life balance, the effects of inequality on the American Dream, whether college is the best option, whether technology is good or bad for us). In addition to the essays you’ve read, find at least two additional essays and explain the different perspectives on this issue. Rather than presenting the issue as having two sides (for or against), explain more than two points of view, showing the complexity of the issue. At some point in the paper, take your own stand but the majority of the paper should explain the larger conversation about the issue.

Assignment 4: Joining a Conversation You’ve Researched (5–7 pages)

Write a researched argument about the issue you discussed in Assignment 3. This paper is your own argument, but you should take into account what you’ve learned during this course: begin by showing the conversation your paper is responding to
(“they say”), have a clear statement of your own argument ("I say"), include quotes and incorporate them smoothly, point out possible objections to your argument, use appropriate transitions, and explain why the issue matters. You might also consider adding metacommentary and finding ways to include your own voice, even though this is academic writing.

**Other Parts of the Assignment**

**Proposal:** Write a one-page proposal for Assignment 4, explaining what topic you’ve chosen and any others you’ve considered. Describe your decision-making process and think ahead to the research process: How will you investigate this topic? What sorts of sources will you look for? What questions or concerns do you have about the project?

**Working thesis:** Email your instructor a working thesis for Assignment 4, including both “they say” and “I say” components, and limiting your statement to no more than a paragraph.

**Source analysis:** Discuss and evaluate two of the sources you’ve found for Assignment 4. Summarize each briefly, explaining what “they say,” and write a short response to each that includes what you say as well as how you might use these sources in a longer paper.
SAMPLE SYLLABUS #2

This syllabus, for a 10-week course, focuses on a single thematic area while also introducing students to the rhetorical moves described in “They Say / I Say.” The reading load is heavier at the beginning of the term, to help students learn to apply the concepts the book presents. Towards the end of the term, they will focus on their own writing, especially the final, longer assignment. All of the in-class activities may not be possible, but this syllabus gives instructors an idea of which activities might work well with that week’s readings.

(Although this syllabus uses Chapter 17, “Are We in a Race against the Machine?” as the thematic focus, any of the other readings chapters can be substituted.)

WEEK ONE

Read  Chapter 12 (“I Take Your Point”: Entering Class Discussions)
       Chapter 1 (“They Say”: Starting with What Others Are Saying)
       NICHOLAS CARR, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” [p. 313]

Write  Answer Carr “Joining the Conversation” questions 1–4 [p. 328]

In-class Activities
   “Using Framing in a Discussion,” from Additional Activities
   Exercise 1 from Chapter 1 [p. 28]
   “Identifying What ‘They Say,’” from Additional Activities

WEEK TWO

Read  Chapter 14 (“What’s Motivating This Writer”: Reading for the
       Conversation)
       Chapter 2 (“Her Point Is”: The Art of Summarizing)
       BROOKE GLADSTONE AND JOSH NEUFELD, “The Influencing Machines” [p. 330]

Write  Write a summary of Carr’s essay

In-class Activities
   Exercises 1 and 2 from Chapter 2 [p. 40]
   “Summary Writing and Review” from Additional Activities

WEEK THREE

Read  Chapter 4 (“Yes/No/Okay, But”: Three Ways to Respond)

Write  Write a response to Carr’s essay to finish Assignment 1

In-class Activities
“A Local Issues Argument” and “An Argument Circle” from Additional Activities

WEEK FOUR

Read  Chapter 3 (“As He Himself Puts It”: The Art of Quoting)
MICHAELA CULLINGTON, “Does Texting Affect Writing?” [p. 361]
SHERRY TURKLE, “No Need to Call” [p. 373]

Write  Answer Cullington “Joining the Conversation” questions 1–4

In-class Activities
Exercises 1 and 2 from Chapter 3 [p. 50]
“Making a Quotation Sandwich” or “When Part of the Sandwich Is Missing” from Additional Activities

WEEK FIVE

Read  Chapter 5 (“And Yet”: Distinguishing What You Say from What They Say)
Chapter 13 (“IMHO”: Is Digital Communication Good or Bad—or Both?)
JENNA WORTHAM, “I Had a Nice Time with You Tonight. On the App” [p. 393]

Write  Assignment 2 draft due

In-class Activities
Exercises 1 and 2 from Chapter 5 [p. 75]
“Evaluation of the First Person” and “Recasting Point of View” from Additional Activities
“Putting the Readings into the Conversation” from Additional Activities

WEEK SIX

Read  Chapter 6 (“Skeptics May Object”: Planting a Naysayer in Your Text)

Write  Assignment 2 due

In-class Activities
Exercise 2 in Chapter 6 [p. 91]
“Playing the Role of the Naysayer” and “That’s Just Wrong” in Additional Activities

WEEK SEVEN
Read Chapter 7 (“So What? Who Cares?": Saying Why It Matters)
Write Proposal due for Assignment 3
In-class Activities
   Exercise 2 in Chapter 7  [p. 101]
   “Asking and Answering ‘So What?’ and ‘Who Cares?’” and “Role-playing the One Who Cares” in Additional Activities

WEEK EIGHT
Read Chapter 8 (“As a Result”: Connecting the Parts)
Write Working Argument and Source Analysis for Assignment 3 due
In-class Activities
   Exercise 1 from Chapter 8  [p. 119]
   “Between Paragraphs/Within Paragraphs” in Additional Activities
   Instruction on research, library databases, and Internet searches.
   Idea workshop. As a class, discuss each student’s working argument, offering suggestions for the project.

WEEK NINE
Read Chapter 9 (“Ain’t So/Is Not”: Academic Writing Doesn’t Always Mean Setting Aside Your Own Voice)
Write Assignment 3 draft due
In-class Activities
   “Two Sample Essays” in Additional Activities
   Exercises 1 and 2 in Chapter 9  [p. 128]

WEEK TEN
Read Chapter 10 (“But Don’t Get Me Wrong”: The Art of Metacommentary)
   Chapter 11 (“He Says Contends”: Using the Templates to Revise)
Write Assignment 3 due
In-class Activities
   Exercise 1 in Chapter 10  [p. 137]
   “A Metacommentary Exchange” in Additional Activities
ASSIGNMENTS

The assignments below work well in a quarter-length term with readings based on a single theme. The assignments build on each other: the first asks students to summarize, quote from, and respond to a single essay, while the second asks them to summarize two related essays and then enter the conversation of the two essays. The final assignment, a culminating piece, uses their own research to support an argument related to the conversation in their major field or community.

Assignment 1: Summarizing, Quoting, Responding (3 pages)
Write an extended summary ("they say") of Nicholas Carr’s essay, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” as well as your response to the arguments made ("I say"). You can use additional essays as support for your own ideas, but you should construct your own argument in response to Carr.

Assignment 2: Entering a Conversation (4 pages)
Choose one of the sets of essays listed below. Summarize both of the authors’ arguments ("they say"), point out how the authors agree and disagree, and craft your own response to the issues the two essays raise ("I say"). Make sure you include a naysayer to show possible objections to your own argument, and address the “so what” factor: why does this issue matter?

Nicholas Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” [p. 313]
Nicholas Carr, “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” [p. 313]
Sherry Turkle, “No Need to Call” [p. 373]
Michaela Cullington, “Does Texting Affect Writing?” [p. 361]
Sherry Turkle, “No Need to Call” [p. 373]

Assignment 3: Joining a Conversation You’ve Researched (5–7 pages)
Write a researched argument about an issue affecting your future career field, your major field, or your community, or an issue described in the readings you’ve done from the book. This paper is your own argument, but you should take into account
what you’ve learned during this course: begin by showing the conversation your paper is responding to (“they say”), have a clear statement of your own argument (“I say”), include quotes and incorporate them smoothly, point out possible objections to your argument, use appropriate transitions, and explain why the issue matters. You might also consider adding metacommentary and finding ways to include your own voice, even though this is academic writing.

**Other Parts of the Assignment**

**Proposal:** Write a one-page proposal for Assignment 3, explaining what topic you’ve chosen and any others you’ve considered. Describe your decision-making process and think ahead to the research process: How will you investigate this topic? What sorts of sources will you look for? What questions or concerns do you have about the project?

**Working thesis:** Email your instructor a working thesis for Assignment 3, including both “they say” and “I say” components, and limiting the argument to no more than a paragraph.

**Source analysis:** Discuss and evaluate two of the sources you’ve found for Assignment 3. Summarize each briefly, explaining what “they say,” and write a short response to each that includes what you say as well as how you might use these sources in a longer paper.