

Handouts

Joe Jargon Handout[PGBRK]

How to Read an Assignment Handout

WordPress Handout[PGBRK]

Writer's Workshops Handout*[PGBRK]*

Seminar Papers Handout[PGBRK]

Library Handout[PGBRK]

Coding, Mind-Mapping, Memoing Handout[PGBRK]

Conferences Handout[PGBRK]

Presentations Handout[PGBRK]

Essential Joe Jargon—Key Terms on Writing Moves

In this course, you're going to encounter the terms below numerous times; I'm borrowing them from Joseph Harris's work. (They are such useful and common shorthand for the key moves of academic writing that, in the Writing 20 curriculum more broadly, they've earned the moniker, "Joe Jargon.") We'll use them both descriptively—when we analyze the writings of others to learn how best (and how not) to execute the key moves of writing—and prescriptively—particularly in responding to your papers, I may comment using the below terms. So, in addition to Harris's essential book on the subject, the below is my own guide to Harris's terms:

Coming to terms: We “come to terms” with writing in order to present a context for our reuse of its ideas, which gives our reuse of those ideas more meaning and value. “Coming to terms” is not only “summarizing” or “identifying one key point.” It's a bigger-picture move, and one aiming at borrowing ideas for our own purposes. In “coming to terms” with a piece of writing, we note its **project**, i.e. what the writer *does* in it (as well as what s/he *says* he does), identify some **keywords** (terms, phrases, ideas, or moments in the text that are packed with meaning, and sometimes recur frequently in a text), and the **uses** and **limits** of that piece of writing for our own purposes, and / or in terms of how it meets its own goal as a project.

Harris describes it this way: "re-presenting the work of others in ways that are both fair to them and useful to your own aims in writing" so we can "offer an accurate account of their work, one that respects its strengths as well as notes its limits" (Harris 2006, 5).

Project: What a writer *does* in a text. You can imagine this in two ways: first, schematically, in terms of *aims* (what a writer says s/he wants to do), *methods* (how they relate the examples offered in their text to the ideas they're building in it), and *materials* (the other texts or other evidence they use in this process). Second, we can synthetically note what they do with these elements, and in what order.

Keywords: As above, terms, phrases, ideas, or moments in the text that are packed with meaning, and sometimes recur frequently in a text. When we work with “keywords,” we typically note the usage of a keyword in one place—quoting the salient bit of text and offering our understanding of it, for the writer and for us—or track the usage of a keyword as it changes or develops throughout a text. Harris emphasizes that we quote a writer not mainly to authorize or support our point of view, but to show what our perspective on the writer's text brings out in that text (that we can use in our own projects) (Harris 2006, 20).

Uses and Limits: *Uses* are a text can be used for—in terms of its author's aims (part of her / his project), in terms of what other writers have used the text for, and in terms of what we could use it for in our own writing project. *Limits* are what, for a reason we make clear, the text can't be used for.

Forward: Extending the *uses* of a text by using its ideas or keywords to help read *another* text or piece of evidence. We can use a text to offer illustrations of ways of thinking on a subject (*illustrate*), borrowing an idea in it and applying it to something else (*borrow*), or noting how we'd change an idea in one text in order to apply it to something else (*extend*). We can also, of course, cite a text as an authority on some fact or claim we make (*authorize*).

Counter: Rethinking or qualifying a text to make its ideas useful for our own project. When we “counter,” we're not just refuting—instead we're following the lines of an argument, often

quoting or summarizing it fairly closely, and identifying the moment where we need to diverge from its thinking to use the ideas begun in it for our own projects.

Take an approach: Extending the *uses* of a text, or set of texts, by using large-scale elements of the text to inform our approach in a project. One analogy we might use to differentiate “taking an approach” from “forwarding” and “countering” is this: if “forwarding” and “countering” are like “sampling” one blues lick from a song in our own song, then “taking an approach” is like taking a song of our own and playing it “in the blues.” In a text, we acknowledge this near the opening by citing a text as an influence on our project, in a large-scale way, and make clear how our questions differ from those of the text of which we’re “taking an approach.”

Road map: A road map is usually placed in or near the introduction of a paper, and in it you note, in order, each major move you make in a paper.

Signpost: A sign post is (usually) a sentence, at a transition point in your paper, that reminds us of where we are in your “road map” at this point in the paper.

How to Read an Assignment

Before sitting down to write a paper for a class, it is important you know exactly what it is you are supposed to do. The first step to writing a successful paper is reading the assignment carefully and paying attention to the clues it gives you about task, structure, and style.

- **READ** the assignment carefully as soon as you get it. Don't put it off! You want to ask yourself two questions. First: How long is writing this paper probably going to take? Make sure that you give yourself enough time to do a good job. Second: Are there any aspects of the assignment you don't understand—from how the professor wants you to approach the question to what citation style to use? If so...

- **ASK** your instructor about anything that is unclear. Don't hesitate to approach your instructor during office hours or send a quick e-mail for clarification. It is in your best interest to clarify the requirements before you do a lot of work, possibly the wrong direction. Don't put off asking for clarification until too close to the deadline.

Assignment Components

Overview

What, in a nutshell, is this assignment asking you to do? **Try to paraphrase your assignment out loud or explain it to a roommate or family member.** Think about why your professor is invested in having you think through this question or problem. How does the assignment fit into the overall goals of the course and the sequence of assignments? How important is this paper for your grade? What are you trying to prove about what you've learned by writing it? If, for example, you're working on the first of three papers, all of similar length and scope, then you can infer that your instructor really wants you to master this format in order to present your knowledge. If this assignment differs from others, think about what new skills or modes of inquiry you're being asked to try out—and why.

Key Terms

Paraphrasing your assignment is an excellent way to identify any key terms that are confusing or will require some serious thought as you begin working on the assignment. **The exact language of your prompt is often as specific and important as the language in, for example, the instructions manual for filling out your taxes. You are responsible for understanding what you're being asked and responding accordingly. Circle or highlight the terms that seem most important for you to understand before you begin working on the paper.** What meaning do they have in the context of your course? Refer to your class notes to think about how your professor has already used these words in the past. After you've spent some time thinking about the language of the prompt, get in touch with your professor for any necessary clarification.

Audience and Style

For whom are you writing this paper? The answer might seem obvious: you'll submit your work to a professor or TA, who will, in all likelihood be the only person to ever read it. But part of the bigger picture of academic writing is entering into a conversation within a preexisting community of thinkers. Imagining such a community for yourself is one of the best ways to avoid feeling like you're simply regurgitating information from class when you write a paper. Ask your instructor to clarify what kind of readership he or she has in mind for the assignment. For example, your Cognitive Psychology professor might ask you to envision either a readership of researchers, with some degree of expertise in your topic, or, alternatively, a readership of a magazine such as the *New Yorker*—fairly literate and generally informed, but with no specific training in the field. Obviously, these two audiences will place quite different demands on both the style and content of your writing. Once you have a general idea of your audience, see the excellent “Checklist for Understanding Your Readers” in *The Craft of Research*¹ for some helpful guidelines for thinking about how audience affects your style.

Evidence

Knowing what kind of evidence you're being asked to use is a crucial step in determining how much time and work your paper is going to require. If you're simply being asked to work closely with texts you've already read (and perhaps discussed) in the context of the course, you know that you won't have to spend much time going to the library to hunt down, evaluate, and analyze additional source materials. If you're being asked to use “outside sources,” budget your time accordingly and ask a lot of questions about what kind of sources you might want to use. If you are having difficulty locating appropriate sources, ask a reference librarian for help. Remember to keep track of citation information for all sources you draw upon.

Additional Resources:

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/readassign.html>

<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~wricntr/documents/Assignment.html>

¹

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb and Joseph M. Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 2nd Ed., Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003: 32.

Jon says:

This Handout was produced by the Writing Studio, and is accessible here:

http://uwp.duke.edu/wstudio/resources/documents/read_assignment_000.pdf

In addition to the above sage advice, I'd offer the following simple workflow of my own:

- *Read the assignment carefully, pen in hand, underlining each requirement*
- *Put each requirement **in your own words** in an outline*
 - *do this **even if there's already an outline of requirements, in the professor's words***
- *Reorganize the outline under headings—I use “content,” “structure,” and “formatting,” which for me are more or less in order of importance, most to least*
- *As you draft your paper, revisit the outline and check off items on it*
- *... and do so again at the end*

The WordPress site for “Sounds of the Field”

The Site

This semester, we’re using WordPress as a way *to make our texts public* and to comment on each others’ drafts. You can see the site here:

- **Section 21** (W/F 1:15pm-2:30pm): http://sites.duke.edu/writing20_21_f2010/
- **Section 22** (W/F 2:50pm-4:05pm): http://sites.duke.edu/writing20_22_f2010/

To post

1. Type in the URL for your class’s WordPress site (see above).
2. Click the small “Log in” link at the bottom right, and log in.
3. Click “Add New” under the “Posts” pane near the top, at left.
4. Type (or copy Word / your word processor of choice) your post title and text into the Post form, as below, and hit Publish.
5. Browse back to URL for your class’s WordPress site and verify that your post is up.

To comment on a post

1. Go to URL for your class’s WordPress site.
2. Click the small “Log in” link at the bottom right, and log in.
3. Return to the URL for your class’s WordPress site.
4. Click the Comment button, which appears as either # *Comments*, or *No Comments*, next to the post you wish to comment on.
5. Type (or copy from Word / your word processor of choice) your comment text into the Comment box that appears, and hit Submit.

Guidelines for Writer's Workshops

Writer

- Bring copies of your text to the workshop (or circulate them beforehand)
- Briefly point out any aspects of the text you would especially like to hear responses to, or any questions or concerns you have about the piece
- Read your text (or selected portions of it) aloud
- Listen quietly and take written notes on the responses of your readers
- Ask any questions you may have after all the readers have responded to your work
- Collect the annotated copies of your text from the readers

Readers

Before reading

- Take notes on any concerns or questions raised by the writer or workshop leader

While reading

- Read along with the writer with a pen in your hand
- Underline effective or strong passages with a straight line 
- Underline passages you may want to ask questions about with a squiggly line 
- Circle or bracket key terms or ideas

After reading

When the writer finishes reading, jot down some notes on:

- What works best in this draft
- What the writer needs most to work on in revising
- Any concerns raised by the writer
- Any issues raised by the workshop leader

Draw on your notes to offer the writer some advice towards revision

Return your annotated copy of the text to the writer

(Handout adapted from Joe Harris's original; see original at: <http://www.duke.edu/~jdharris/workshop.html>)

Seminar Discussions

In seminar discussions, we'll take the work of one or two class writers (it could be you!) as our texts to discuss.

Why?

This format obviously focuses the class as a whole on the work of only a few class members, but don't let that fool you—seminar discussions are a two-way street. In a seminar discussion, the writer receives a lot of valuable feedback on their work. But all class members gain from thinking through the ideas of the writer: how do they *do* what they do in their essay? We can learn, in other words, ways to organize our own thoughts and express ourselves through taking seriously the work of another.

How?

I'll do my best to check in with you prior to the class if your text is up for discussion. You (the writer) will read the text (sometimes in its entirety, and sometimes just a selected portion) to the entire class, who will use the Writer's Workshop guidelines to mark up the text.

And then we'll scribble several short reflections: we'll reflect on what works and what doesn't in the essay as a whole; and what ideas provoked further thought in us—how would we like to “forward,” “counter,” or “take the approach” of the writer? I'd suggest the following as guidelines for your reflections:

- State in a sentence or two what you see as the project of the essay.
- Connect this project to the work we are doing in Writing 20; describe how the writer responds to the texts and issues we have been discussing.
- Note what works especially well; point to those moments in the draft that strike you as particularly interesting, provoking, well-argued, nicely illustrated, or the like.
- Suggest one or two ways in which the writer might develop, extend, qualify, or rethink the project of her or his essay. This is not a moment to offer advice on editing, proofreading, or other more local matters of style and correctness.
- Identify a moment in the writer's text that you'd like to take up, forward, or counter, and tell us how!

We'll then speak in turn, offering our reflections on the text. (If your reflection connects particularly well to someone else's, you're welcome to wave your hand and speak “out of turn”—but everyone should get a chance to offer their reflection to the writer.) The writer can respond to each commenter in turn.

(The above guidelines include text adapted from Joseph Harris's “Responding to Work in Revision”; see the original at: <http://www.duke.edu/~jdharris/responding.html>)

Using the Library to provide context for your writing on sound and sport

Next class, we'll be meeting in the Music Library (not in our usual classroom). **Bring your laptops if you can--you'll need them.** We'll have an hour for the following task: use the Library's online databases, and the print sources you can find in the Music Library, to *1) identify one concept (theoretical idea) another scholar has generated that is relevant to the statement you're trying to make about sound in sport, and 2) an ethnographic site (data) another scholar has drawn on that might prove relevant if compared to sites of sport and sound.*

A few more ground rules for each of these tasks:

1) You'll find *concepts* mentioned in scholarly sources, which for this class means journal (not magazine or newspaper) articles, and scholarly books. A *concept* here is a named idea that receives a formal description, often citing other literature, in a scholarly work.

The best places to look for scholarly sources are databases that focus on fulltext articles—JStor is the best of these. You could also use the Library's E-Journals to browse and search key ethnomusicology and anthropology journals, such as Ethnomusicology, the Yearbook for Traditional Music, the World of Music, and the Journal of American Folklore. JStor and E-Journals can also turn up scholarly books, since journals review scholarly books too.

Failing the above, you might also search ProQuest Digital Dissertations—it may be that someone has written a graduate thesis about sound and society that's particularly relevant to you.

When you find an article or book referencing your methods, save the reference in a note, and add a note or two of your own on what struck you about it. Look up the article, or head to the Library stacks and find it, bring it back, and read the Abstract or the introductory paragraphs, and add a note or two on the larger "project" of the author and the method they use.

2) In the scholarly sources you've found, you'll also find the author mentions their *sites* (a place or set of places that the scholar constructs around her research subject). Read the portion of the article or book you've gotten where the writer describes the site of their research, and jot down a note about how they describe it, and how it as a site relates to their conclusions.

Then write a brief note comparing the sport sites you've visited, in comparison to the site the scholar wrote about, and how you might expect your site to relate to your conclusions.

When you've found / produced them, please show the citations and notes you've produced to the Librarian!

Annotating / Coding, Mind-Mapping, and Outlining

Annotation is a technique used by many academic writers to help select the most important ideas in their research and pre-writing, as an intermediary step to writing a text for a wider audience to read; mind-mapping and outlining are ways of organizing such annotations in terms of conceptual linkages and linear order, respectively. We'll use these three techniques to annotate our research notes, and to think through the structure of the final paper we'll write using them.

How do we annotate?

Quite simply, you'll re-read all of your research notes as well and mark them up, either with a pen and paper, or in-text using easily found "tags" (like @@at signs@@) in a word processor. What should you mark? Add one or two-word notes with your ideas about what *you* see as particularly important, interesting, or meaningful in the text. If you're working with primary texts on music—fieldnotes or notes on popular publications, for example—you'll also want to note the features of that text that correspond to your research focus. For example, if you're focusing on how fans of a genre dress, make sure you note each description of dress.

On first runthrough, an annotated primary text (in this case, a fieldnote), in which the researcher was focusing on the relationship of space to role, might look like this:

The building ought to be more live than Holyrood, but it isn't. A large white @@gym@@-like structure, with and @@organ@@ and @@piano@@ at front left, risers and platform in the middle, and @@choir@@ facing us on the right. They @@filed in@@ in order! The @@congregation@@ sits in two sides of rows with a centre aisle down the long room, facing the front -- @@families with kids@@ at the back, a lot of @@young people@@ in about the middle, everyone else around. The @@worship leader@@ sits at the front, and so does the choir.

Now, review your texts, looking specifically at the annotations: do they coalesce around important themes? Do similar concepts repeat often? Do certain images or ideas you've noticed seem particularly meaningful? Add new annotation expressing these connections.

How do we mind-map?

Mind-mapping is a way to brainstorm conceptual linkages between ideas; it's not organized in a linear way, but rather in a radial way, like a wheel's hub and its spokes. In a mind-map, you begin with a central term—the main idea, site, place, event, et cetera; for this assignment, likely your choral event itself—written on the middle of a page. You then "branch out" to either side of that middle term by drawing a set lines connecting the middle term to other terms; and you branch out from each additional term to more terms, and so forth. Mind maps are easier to read if you use colored lines to identify different branches, and draw small symbols next to terms identifying themes that are connected but not linked with lines. Here's an excerpt of a mind map from my own work:

Conferences

Conferences are an opportunity to meet with me and discuss your work in progress. They are a particularly useful way to generate ideas and focus for your revising work. You'll notice that conferences, when they are scheduled, stand in for our class meetings—so take full advantage of both the time with me, to work on setting priorities and directions for revision of your work, and the additional time freed up by the cancellation of our normal class meetings, to actually do that revising work!

To schedule a conference

You'll reply to my Doodle request for a time to meet me—times are first-come, first-serve.

To prepare for the conference

Of course, be on-time with the online submission of the draft that we discussed. (This gives me time to read and gather some thoughts on your draft.) Prior to meeting with me, re-read your draft, and consider: what works in it right now, and how? What doesn't quite work, and how? What are you *trying* to accomplish in it? What do you *need* to do that you don't yet know how to? Bring these answers along to the conference; they'll form the basis for our discussion in the conference.

After the conference

Please take notes during the conference. Review your notes and do your best, using the additional time available to you on a conference week, to do the revisions you've set out for yourself during our conference.

Panel Discussions / Presentations

Academics in the humanities and social sciences often share their work with others in the context of gatherings called “conferences”; these conferences are usually organized around groupings of four papers clocking in at about twenty minutes each, which the authors read to a gathered audience. The audience chimes in with questions and critiques after the authors have read their work.

In Writing 20, we’ll modify this format to share our final work for the course, and to gather feedback on our ideas and writing. How will this work? You’ll read your entire final paper, presuming it can be read in about twenty minutes. As a rule of thumb, each 250-word page of double-spaced text takes about a minute and forty seconds to read; if your W3 draft, then, is longer than 3000 words (about 12 pp) you may need to cut some text. If you need to cut text, I recommend cutting portions that are *not* your field story nor your final conclusions. In addition to your printed text, you may also include a section of video or audio recording, or photographs (you’re not required to do this, however)—there’s a VGA projector in each room that can accommodate your laptop (or iPad—I’ll provide a VGA cable for the iPad).

Each Workgroup forms a three-paper panel. (See the Syllabus schedule, and your notes on when you’ve signed up to present, to check when your group is up.) When your Workgroup presents its papers, you should take notes on the comments you receive from class members during class—and review the notes they’ve posted to the Blackboard discussions as well. These comments will be useful as you complete your last revisions and edits on Writing Project 2. And, when you present, be happy! Congratulations! You’ve made the journey from a blank piece of paper to presenting your work to a set of critical, well-informed colleagues!