



## Brainstorming & Getting Started

- What is the prompt/assignment asking me to do?
- What is the rationale, or what are the learning goals, behind the assignment?
- I can't seem to get started on this paper. Can you help?
- Do you think I'm going in the right direction?
- Are my ideas too vague, broad, or ambitious for this assignment?
- Can I just talk about my ideas for a while before committing anything to paper?
- Am I focusing on what the prompt/professor is asking me to do?
- Now that we've brainstormed, how can I connect this assignment to the material in class that interests me most?
- This is what I have so far, but it feels disconnected. How can I develop this into a coherent thesis or argument?
- What are some different ways of constructing an outline (listing, idea/concept maps, etc.)?



## Thesis/ Argument

- What exactly is a thesis? What does it look like? Where do I put it? Can you show me some examples?
- Is my thesis statement easy to identify and find? Does my thesis address the prompt?
- Is my thesis arguable? Is it too broad, narrow, vague, or obvious? Is it too easy to disprove?
- For this kind of assignment/paper, do I need a thesis?
- Do my argument and evidence support my thesis?
- Do I have enough evidence to support my claim? Do I have the right *kind* of evidence? (See also the Citations Q card!)
- Is my argument consistent throughout the text? Does my thesis statement cover all the arguments I make in the whole paper?
- Would acknowledging a counter-argument strengthen my paper? How can/should I refute it?
- Based on my thesis statement, do you understand what I'm trying to argue?





## Citations + Incorporating & Analyzing Evidence

- Where or who can I go to for more information about the required citation style (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.)?
- I am unclear about my professor's expectations for citations. Is what I have so far meeting the expectations of the assignment?
- Am I balancing outside evidence and quotations with my own analysis and ideas? How could I correct any imbalance?
- Do I interpret this quotation adequately?
- This is how I interpreted this quotation. Does my interpretation seem plausible?
- I am working with \_\_\_\_ [type of source], which I am unfamiliar with. How do I integrate it into my paper?
- In my summaries or paraphrases of outside sources, am I accidentally plagiarizing? How can I avoid it?
- How can I determine if my outside sources are credible and appropriate for this assignment?



## Organization & Flow

- Can you look at my rough outline? Do my points support a coherent argument?
- I hate making outlines. Are there other ways to sketch out the structure of a paper?
- Do you, as an outside reader, follow my argument?
- Do my body paragraphs follow a logical order? If not, what are some other ways I could organize them?
- Are all of these points related to the prompt and my working thesis?
- Is this an effective transition?
- How can I connect these two paragraphs so one transitions smoothly into the next?
- What is a topic sentence?
- Can you help me break down my thesis into a few main ideas so I can expand them into topic sentences?
- Is this idea, section, paragraph, sentence, or word out of place? Is there a better place for it?





## Introductions & Conclusions

- What goes in an introduction? Can you show me examples? (See the Thesis/Argument Q card for more information!)
- In high school, we were taught to start a paper with a "hook." Should I do that for this particular assignment?
- Do I provide enough background information on the topic to set up my thesis, or, conversely, have I included too much information too early?
- What is a roadmap? Do I need one in the introduction of this paper?
- I don't know what a conclusion is supposed to look like for this type of assignment. What should I include in my conclusion and what should I leave out?
- I want to bring my thesis back into my conclusion, but I'm not sure how to do that without being repetitive.
- Is my argument consistent between the beginning and end of my paper?
- Where should I explain the importance of my argument to my reader?
- Is anything missing from my conclusion?
- By the end, are you satisfied or confused?



## Clarity

- Where could I improve word choice?
- Are you able to understand the main idea of this sentence? This paragraph? This section?
- Could you tell me what you think I'm trying to say in this part of the paper? If you are confused, do you think it's because of the language I use, the way I have organized the paper, or other factors?
- Is the reason I included this source/paragraph/sentence/image clear? Is it useful?
- Am I using unnecessary or repetitive words?
- My text is too long. What can I do to shorten it without losing the meaning?
- Are you familiar with this subject? If not, does this make sense to you anyway?
- Am I making this content accessible for an outside reader who is not familiar with the subject? If not, how might I make the topic more understandable?
- What is the passive voice? When can or should I use or avoid it? What is the active voice?





## Grammar, Sentence Construction, & Word Choice

*Working with grammar can be challenging! To get the most out of this consultation, we encourage you to be as specific as you can with your questions. Even if you aren't sure of the technical term for a particular grammar issue, pointing to specific words/phrases in your paper will help us to help you.*

- This sentence doesn't sound right to me, but I'm not sure why. How does it sound to you?
- I've gotten feedback about [a specific grammar problem]. Do you notice that in my draft? How do I change/fix it?
- Are there any sentences or phrases that stand out to you as confusing/unclear/grammatically incorrect?
- Where does the grammar or construction of this sentence make it difficult for a reader to understand what I'm trying to say?
- Does it make sense/sound weird when I read it out loud?
- Basically, what I'm trying to say here is \_\_\_\_\_. Is that coming through in what I have written so far?
- Is my tone/style appropriate for the audience of this assignment?
- Do you have any suggestions for how I can proofread my own work in the future?
- Do you notice any particular patterns of error in my writing?



## When English Is Not Your Strongest Language

- Can you suggest some words or phrases that might make my idea sound more clear, especially places where I say too little or just repeat words I've used before?
- I've been told my English is not idiomatic, but I want it to be. Can you point out phrases and words in my writing that sound in any way strange to you, and then suggest alternatives that still say what I want but in more typical English?
- I know my expressions might sound unusual because English is not my first language, but I only want to change them if they make my meaning unclear. Can you just tell me if any phrases actually make my ideas hard to understand?
- Could you help me notice when I have \_\_\_\_ grammar error (e.g., subject-verb agreement, verb tense, or singular-plural agreement)?
- Do my prepositions (e.g., "sympathy *for*" or "sympathy *with*") look right?
- I don't always know when I do and don't need "the" or "a." Can you help me get those right?





# Understanding and Using Feedback

- Do you see a pattern in my professor's comments on this particular paper?
- Can you help me make sense of my professor's comments so I know what to do on the next paper or on a revision of this paper?
- How should I talk to the professor if I don't understand their comments, or if I disagree with what they're telling me to do?
- My professor's and my peers' feedback seem contradictory. How should I decide whose advice to follow?

