

English Studies Program

Guide to Essay Writing

A Guide

Before you begin to write the final essay carefully study the texts you are to write about. This means beginning work well before the essay is due.

- Read the assigned topic carefully. Note that not all essay topics take the form of a question. Essay assignments provide matters for consideration and not necessarily questions to answer.
- Make a plan, arranging your ideas in related groups and logical sequence.
- Make a first draft which is a sketch of your essay, containing all your main points, but not necessarily in order. In the first draft, you "think on paper".
- Check that all points are relevant to the matter under consideration.

In second and subsequent drafts

- Relate all points back to the topic. For example, do not just state that something is a problem without explaining why.
- Observe the normal conventions of grammar, spelling and punctuation. You may be penalised for incorrect grammar, poor spelling or sub-standard expression.
- Avoid idiomatic usage, slang and jargon.
- Do not abbreviate. "Isn't", "don't", and "aren't" are fine when you need a conversational style, but unacceptable in a formal essay.
- Aim for simplicity of style. Most difficulties of expression arise from attempts at unnecessary complexity. Before you use a new or unfamiliar term, make sure you understand how to use it.
- Your essay should be an attempt at criticism. Do not put facts about a writer's or film-maker's life and background into the essay unless they are relevant to the critical points you are making.
- Do not simply "tell the story" of the text. Your marker will know it well.
- Give your own views. Do not take over the opinions of others unless you have thought about them and applied

them for yourself. If time is getting short, it is better to study the text again than try to paste together a critical compilation. (Critical compilations are not rated very highly in this discipline. Your marker really wants to know how YOU can answer the question. Your use of criticism is just one of your tools.)

Presentation

- You are not marked on presentation, but if you think it is unimportant, you are very wrong.
- To enable you to gain maximum feedback on your work, you need to give the marker room to comment. Please adhere to the following:
 - use double-spacing;
 - use paper no smaller than A4 in size;
 - leave a wide margin of no less than 3 cm;
 - write on only one side of the paper.
- So as not to annoy the marker, please:
 - make sure your essay has an appropriate-level title page and that the name of the assignment and the name of your marker are correct;
 - proof-read the script before handing it in. Carelessness costs marks.
- Ensure you are using citations correctly and consistently. (See section on citation in this handbook).
- Titles of books and journals should be underlined or italicised, while those of individual poems, chapters and essays, for example, should go in inverted commas: "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" first appeared in a volume called *Lyrical Ballads*... (See Section of Citation).
- In Screen Studies citations, remember that the title of a movie or a television show should be italicised or underlined. The title of a television episode should go in inverted commas: *Seinfeld* (episode: "The Puffy Shirt").
- In addition, at the first mention of a major character, you should give the name of the actor in brackets. At subsequent mentions, you are then able to distinguish between the actions of the character in the text, and the way in which that character is portrayed by the actor.

Helpful Reference Books

- M.H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* N.Y.: Holt, Reinhart and Winston
- Chris Baldick (ed), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, OUP, 1990.

- John Clanchy and Brigid Ballard, *Essay Writing for Students: A Practical Guide*, Longman Cheshire: Melbourne, 1986.
- Sir Ernest Gowers (ed.), *Fowler's Modern English Usage* O.U.P.
- David Lodge (ed), *Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader*, Longman, 1988.
- Ross Murfin & Supriya M. Ray, *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literacy Terms*, Bedford/St Martins, Boston, 2003.
- Pam Peters, *Strategies for Student Writers*, John Wiley and Sons, 1985.
- Ira Konigsberg, *The Complete Film Dictionary*, NAL Books, NY, 1987.
- Raman Selden, *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literacy Theory*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1997.
- N. Thomas (ed), *The International Dictionary of Films and Filmmakers*, Vols. 1-5. St. James Press: London, 1990

How to Improve your Essays

Note: This section is a guide to the structuring of an English Studies essay. It is not intended to prescribe a particular critical methodology or to provide a preferred reading of the poem used as the example. A poem has been chosen because it is a convenient example in a familiar genre.

Where to start

In answering a question, there are usually four steps to take before getting down to write (assuming, of course, that you have a thorough knowledge of the text or texts covered by the question). You must:

- (a) Analyse the question
- (b) Collect the evidence for your answer
- (c) Work out an argument
- (d) Decide on a structure for the argument, and hence for the essay

There is no "formula" for a good essay, but it does take time and needs applied thought. A one-draft sketch is not good enough at University level. Moreover, the process does not happen in discrete stages - as you analyse the question, you will be collecting evidence and working out your argument - but these are tasks you must complete before handing in your essay.

In order to make the following comments mean something in a practical sense, we will assume that they all apply to the following essay question on a poem by Gwen Harwood. This poem has been

used because it is a text you can see as a whole. Whilst the text may be different from the kind of text your essay deals with, the techniques can be used to apply to almost any text you will have to use. If you feel you need more help, please ask the subject co-ordinator.

The question: How does Gwen Harwood define the female subject of "Suburban Sonnet: Boxing Day?" Can you suggest any reasons for the choice of the sonnet form?

Length: 1000-1500 words (You have to consider the length when planning the essay).

Suburban Sonnet: Boxing Day

Gold, silver, pink and blue, the globes distort her;
framed in the doorway: woman with a broom.
Wrappings and toys lie scattered round the room.
A glossy magazine the children bought her
lies open: *How to keep your husband's love*.
She stands and stares, as if in recollection,
at her own staring acid-pink reflection.
The simple fact is, she's too tired to move.

O where's the demon lover, the wild boy
who kissed the future to her flesh beneath
what skies, what stars, what space! and swore to love her
through hell's own fires? A child stretches above her
and, laughing, crowns her with a tinsel wreath.
She gathers up a new, dismembered toy. Gwen Harwood

(A) The Question

Highlight the parts of the question. which require argument or analysis:

How does Gwen Harwood define the female subject of "Suburban Sonnet: Boxing Day?" Can you suggest any reasons for the choice of the sonnet form?

You could ask yourself a series of questions like these:

- i. What is the female subject?
- ii. What does "define" mean?
- iii. What does the word "how" entail?
- iv. What meanings attach to the sonnet form? Why something so formal?

Now, attack each of your questions before you work out the structure of the essay, or the argument. Remember, it's a two-part question. Don't ignore or underestimate the second part.

Your brief notes in answer to your question might look something like this:

- i. What is the female subject of the poem?

The female subject of the poem is the suburban woman, the mother who is cleaning up on Boxing day. She is an object of representation in the same sense as an artist's model is. In fact, the poem could also be titled: "Woman with a broom", because Harwood tells us the woman is "Framed" in the doorway in that aspect, just as a painting is "framed".

There could also be said to be a more general analysis of female subjectivity at work here in Harwood's presentation of the woman's state of oppression, and, implicitly, that of all suburban "housewives". In this sense, the "frame" could be the cultural and social conditioning, that "frames" the woman as an object of beauty, yet constrains her in the role of housewife.

- ii. What does "define" mean?

Define. As used with words, it has the sense of outlining the meaning; making clear. In drawing, to define means to make something look definite, to outline it so it can be seen against a background. (It is not a good idea to quote the dictionary. Look the word up if you feel the need, but just take the definition on board and apply it to the question.)

- iii. What does the word "how" entail?

"**How** does G.H. define her focus?" How = by what means?
Perhaps use painting analogy.

- (a) **by the use of her raw materials** (like paints of particular colours, and particular kinds of brushes)
What **literary** tools, conventions and devices does she use to convey a clear picture of the woman in her poem?

Literary tools = kind of language; kinds of images (patterns of imagery?)

Conventions. Look up sonnet form conventions.

LINK (see sections on argument and structure)

- (b) **by the composition of the portrait** (hence by the woman's context in the poem)
- her relationship between mother and children.
 - relationship between the woman and partner
 - her physical positioning ("framing") in the room, and in her culture.

iv. Why would she choose the sonnet form? Why something so formal?

(If you know nothing at all about the sonnet, this is the stage at which you head for the library - not the encyclopedia or the dictionary - and find a good, readable, general book. You'll need to read some sonnets as well, to get the "feel" of the form and see how it works.) You will make notes and apply them to the poem.

Some Conclusions About The Sonnet, Based On Your Notes:

The sonnet is conventionally a love-poem, usually "spoken" by a man about a woman, extolling her beauty and expressing his undying love. Gwen Harwood is obviously using this conventional form ironically, subverting the conventions, to show how unlike the conventional sonnet woman her female subject is.

This could be a literary means of highlighting the alarming contrast between the representation of woman as beautiful object, (and the connotations of cultural conditioning surrounding that representation) and her functional role as "woman with a broom". Whereas the conventional sonnet woman is portrayed as physically beautiful, this woman can be seen as a drudge, very tired, a victim of her suburban framework; and any love the children's father had felt for her has died.

The choice of such a rule-bound poetic form as the sonnet could also be seen as a means of contrasting the notions of order - demanded by the conventions of the form - and chaos- in the woman's physical and spiritual life.

Problems With The Question

Clarity. If the question is not clear to you, spend some time trying to work it out, make some notes about your possible interpretation, and THEN, if you still have problems, go and ask your tutor or lecturer. Part of the challenge of many question is to work out the implications, or work out an angle of approach.

Unfamiliar terms. If the question contains terms you do not

understand, look them up yourself, THEN go to your tutor or lecturer if you still don't understand them. No teacher likes to be regarded as a ready-reckoner.

(B) Evidence

There are at least three kinds of evidence you could collect for an essay of this kind. The first and second are essential.

- i. Textual evidence from the poem, to support your argument.
- ii. Information on the sonnet, to support your argument on the use of the sonnet form.
- iii. Information on Gwen Harwood, her poetry, and critical comment on the poem set for study.

i. Textual evidence from the poem.

You have to go through the poem in detail, deciding which parts of the poem support each point you are making. In this case, you will also have made some notes on sonnet conventions, to use as evidence. You will also note points you think are useful, and rough comments.

You could **make some rough notes** like these - only some will be in sentence form.

Framing of the character, as in a picture

- The woman is "framed in the doorway" (l.2)
- Given a title: "woman with a broom"; defined, labelled
- She ends the poem by being crowned (framed in tinsel), by her laughing child.
- "tinsel wreath" - double-edged image - something like a crown (celebration), but probably more like a crown of thorns (Christ/Christmas/suffering)
- "dismembered toy", - like the woman. (Use in last section, to sum up)

Character's self-definition. REFLECTION

'She stands and stares, as if in recollection,
at her own staring, acid-pink reflection" (ll.6-7)

1. She's not the object of anyone's gaze except her own. This is the conventional picture of the woman as object (of the male gaze), turned in on itself.

2. Normally, if a person is portrayed looking into a mirror, it is to signify pride or self-love. This is not the case here, for this woman does not like what she sees.

Combine these notes into a fluid sequence. The first line could have been a very conventional picture of the woman-as-object (very like a painting of a woman looking away from the observer), but this expectation is undermined by the second line, when we discover she's looking at her own reflection.

The fact that Harwood's woman sees her reflection in a glossy magazine article titled: "How to keep your husband's love" has tremendous significance. It has to be a distorted reflection, because this woman seems to have lost her husband's love. "acid-pink" could refer to the colour reflected in the light of the glossy magazine - harsh, artificial, all-too-pink and not at all a true picture of the exhausted mother. If not quite oxymoronic, the combination is at least paradoxical, contradictory.

- To answer the 'how' question, think about word choice and sound effects. Note the sibilance in the words. "Stares", "stands", "as if", "acid". By reinforcing the sibilance in the two lines, Harwood is able to suggest the stinging, acidic effect of the pain in the woman's life.
- She's a distorted object. She's even distorted by the coloured globes, in the first line of the poem. (Look at all the images of reflection: globes, tinsel, magazine. What significance? Images of distortion culminate in dismembered toy.)

ii. Information on the Sonnet

Features of the sonnets. (You would have notes like these - but far more):

Sonnet almost invariably written from the male point of view. Harwood reverses this, and has the male absent

Hyperbole:

"Queen Virtue's Court, which some call Stella's face..." (Sidney, *Astrophel and Stella IX*)

Depiction of the woman's face:

The door by which sometimes comes forth her grace
Red porphyry is, which lock of pearl makes sure,
Whose porches rich- which name of cheeks endure-
Marble, mixt red and white, do interlace... (Sidney, A & S, IX)

Woman as a worthy prize:

... O no! Her heart is such a citadel
So fortified with wit, stor'd with disdain,
That to win it is all the skill and pain. (Sidney, A.&S XII)

Harwood's heroine compared with Sidney's Stella

"... too tired to move"

"woman with a broom"

Convenience of the sonnet convention that allows for a change of movement in the sestet. Woman can reflect on past romance, now gone. Nice lines:

who kissed the future of her flesh beneath
what skies, what stars, what space! and swore to love her
through hell's own fires?

(Note: if you particularly LIKE a section of a work, it is a good idea to use it if you can, and it is worth working on, because YOU feel you're getting something really worthwhile out of it).

- significant that these lines are about a past love, an absent lover.

- used to contrast with the child's innocent crowning of the mother with the wreath, to bring her back abruptly into the context of the gaudy post-Christmas mess.

- The reference to her "demon lover" is to someone who is absent (whether in spirit or physically absent we are not told).

- The magazine is a good counterpoint to the sonnet, because it represents the encoded picture of the 20th century ideal of female beauty. Two kinds of texts by which woman has been defined and has defined herself.

iii. Information on Gwen Harwood, her poetry, and critical comment on the poem set for study

Another Harwood sonnet. It is wise to have a look at some of the poet's other work, and quite valid to make slight reference to other works in your essay, by way of comparison. In this case, another of Harwood's sonnets, 'In the Park' depicts a comparable relationship between mother and children. You should note down sections from the poem which could be useful; for example, the following:

She sits in the park. Her clothes are out of date.

Two children whine and bicker; tug her skirt.

A third draws aimless patterns in the dirt. (ll 1-3) p.151*

***This is meant to look exactly like YOUR PAGE OF NOTES; not like a page in your essay. You should note down every detail**

of the reference so you can find it again in the original source, and cite it in your bibliography later.

She meets "someone she loved once" and they engage in aimless conversation, about the children's birthdays, etc. The sonnet ends on a note not dissimilar from that of "Suburban Sonnet; boxing day", with the woman feeling shattered:

... 'It's so sweet
to hear their chatter, watch them grow and thrive,'
She says to his departing smile. Then, nursing
the youngest child, sits staring at her feet.
To the wind she says, 'They have eaten me alive.' (ll 9-14)
p.152

Ref: Gwen Harwood, 'In the Park', in J. Barnes and B. McFarlane, (ed.), *Cross-Country: a Book of Australian Verse*, (Richmond: Heinemann, 1984), pp 151-52.

Some critical comment

'Poems like "Suburban Sonnet; boxing day" only just hold on rein her irritation at playing wife and mother, at the drag of domesticity... '

Ref: Vincent O'Sullivan, 'Voices from the Mirror: on Approaching Gwen Harwood', *Gwen Harwood, CRNLE, Essays and Monographs Series, No.3, 1989, p.36.*

'Children are innocent and vicious, the uncorrupted future and our own uncorrupted selves in the past, remorseless consumers and dispensers of their mothers' vitality and identity, possible redeemers of a fallen world.'

Ref: Andrew Taylor, 'Gwen Harwood: the Golden Child Aloft on Discourse', *Gwen Harwood, CRNLE, Essays and Monographs Series, No.3, 1989, p.80.*

Problems with the Evidence

Too much secondary material. Never write an essay which is just a string of critical comments. Even when they are correctly acknowledged (so that they are not, strictly speaking, plagiarised), your mark will not be high. Your marker is looking for (and is actually interested in) **your own** critical approach to the text or texts. Even when you use critical sources well, we are looking for the skill with which you use them. Moreover, if you try to splice together too many critical views, you'll often come up with an argument that contradicts itself.

Isolated and unrelated evidence. One problem some students

encounter results from their concern about backing up every point they make. These students try to write an essay using nothing but "evidence", in the form of a series of unexplained quotations. Hence what they present is really just a lot of note-material, without an argument. An essay must have **argument and evidence**.

NB. It must be obvious to the reader that the evidence is used to make a point, and that the point is related to the question being answered. Quotation without explanation is not evidence.

How to use evidence from the text:

You might have the following idea based on textual "evidence":

In 'Suburban Sonnet; Boxing Day', Gwen Harwood wants us to see the woman in a messy, untidy setting. Evidence for this is provided by the following lines:

Wrappings and toys lie scattered round the room. (L.3)

...

She gathers up a new, dismembered toy. (l.14)

This is a useful point, and you have selected the appropriate quotations, **but** it makes no sense unless you relate it to the question. **You need to explain**, so you justify your conclusion:

In "Suburban Sonnet; Boxing Day", Gwen Harwood wants her readers to see the woman in a messy, untidy setting. At the beginning of the poem, she is carrying a broom, clearing up the Christmas debris, as

Wrappings and toys lie scattered round the room. (L.3).

As the picture of the woman becomes clearer, Harwood reveals that it is not merely the woman's physical situation but her whole life that is in disarray. The reflection she sees of herself in the glossy magazine is harsh and "acid-pink". She has lost her "demon-lover". At the end of the sonnet's octet, we are told:

The simple fact is, she's too tired to move. (l.8)

By the end of the poem, the mess has come to represent the woman's fragmented existence, both physical and spiritual, so that when

She gathers up a new, dismembered toy (l.14)

it seems that she is also resignedly "picking up the pieces" of her domestic life to carry on in her function as mother.

(Now you have made your point; you have not only STATED

the evidence, but you have also USED it as part of your argument)

Some Notes About Notes

- **Take down everything you could possibly need for footnotes or bibliography.** If you don't take notes systematically you can waste a lot of time going back later, trying to trace references. If you are referring to a library book, it is often very useful to note down the call number and, where you use more than one library, the name of the library.
- **Write clearly when taking down notes by hand.**
- When you are noting down the writer's exact words, make sure you indicate in your notes where the direct quotations begin and end.
- Resign yourself to the fact that, because of the constraints of word-limits, you might have to leave some of your good points, or your good quotations, out. The quotation from Andrew Taylor in the section above, for example, looks like a really impressive quotation, but if it doesn't fit with any of the points you finally decide to use, you'd have to leave it out.

(C) Argument

In practice, you often work out the argument and structure together, but for our present purposes, we will assume you can separate them.

The argument is the angle from which you attack the question. It is often a very simple argument, but it must always be supported by evidence. The main part of your essay will not be the statement of the argument, but the way you justify it or work it out in the form of the essay.

Before you **can** argue anything about the text, you must have read it critically. You might not have detailed textual notes, but you will know the text well enough to know what you think about it, in broad terms. If you find you are twisting the text to suit or fit in with the argument, change the argument.

Based on your understanding of the question, the statement of your argument for this essay might look something like this:

In "Suburban Sonnet: Boxing Day," Gwen Harwood subverts the conventions of the sonnet form to "celebrate" a "woman with a broom". The deliberate "framing" of her female focus in

a suburban doorway, highlights the ironic contrast between traditional representations of woman; as conventional object of poetic platitudes of love and compliments of portraiture; and her more usual real-life function as housewife, mother and domestic drudge.

Like a painter, Harwood uses both the colour and texture of her raw materials, and their composition, to achieve a clear definition of her female subject. The tone of the poem, hence the view of the woman, is achieved by a combination of the language used to describe her and the context in which she is placed and seen in the poem.

Gwen Harwood defines the woman in this poem spatially, socially and culturally, by placing her in the context of a late twentieth-century suburban household. The time is Christmas, traditionally a season for the celebration of divine motherhood, and in our culture a time for ritual family celebration - and a lot of hard work for the females of the house. She confers on the woman only the gaudiest of the trappings of such festivities, to show that this woman is no longer able to radiate the warmth of real love.

The sonnet is a particularly appropriate form to point up the contrast between the conventional made-to-formula representation of woman and the twentieth-century flesh-and-blood suburban housewife. It encoded the Elizabethan view of the beautiful woman - with lips like cherries and teeth like pearls - which has been passed down and transformed into cliché by mediocre versifiers and song-writers. Other parts of the package, though derived from the middle ages, were conventions like the inflated compliment and the vow of undying love, which have constructed our culture's representation of woman ever since. It is Harwood's aim to distance her central figure as far as possible from the myth, so she goes to one of its poetic roots to find an antidote. (In this statement of argument, you have in fact answered the first part of the question by using the second, which will help you when structuring the essay). This is merely your initial statement. The rest of your essay will be a working-out of this argument.

Problems with the argument

Generalisation. General statements may sound impressive to the untrained ear, but they are absolutely useless without substantiation. You must back up any general statement you make. If you can't back it up, leave it out. If all you do in your essay is make a series of assertions, you can expect a low mark.

Attempts to impress. Students sometimes try to adopt debating tactics in their essays, by using expressions like: "obviously..", "it is of course...", "it is a fact that...". Usually it isn't at all obvious, and it isn't a fact, so avoid this tactic.

(Your aim is always to convince your reader by providing the best argument you can construct, but you don't have to beat the poor person over the head to get your point across.)

"Therefore", and "Thus". Unless you are drawing a conclusion from a lot of evidence, you will not need to use "therefore" or "thus". It can get you into trouble, because it is an old and tired standby for desperate people trying to make a couple of unrelated points look like an argument.

(D) Structure

Here are two possible ways to structure an argument for this essay:

(a) Based on language and imagery

- Intro. and statement of argument
- Physical framing - 'woman with a broom'. Language, imagery etc.
- Sonnet conventions
- Broader discussion of sonnet
- Final statement contrasting conventional and actual representations.

(b) Based on motifs in the poem

- Intro. and statement of argument
- "Framing" - Physical framing of woman "framing" herself - i.e. incriminating herself by seeing her own image in a poor light.
- "Reflection" - Contrast magazine and sonnet as "reflections" of woman.
- Final statement.

Problems with structure

Linking the first and second parts of the question

Use a linking section; in this case, the section on the sonnet conventions as a literary means of definition.

Linking the sections of the essay

In the suggested outlines above, there are four or five sections. Although each can be written separately (always start with the easiest part of the essay, to "warm up"), the parts must appear to

follow and to relate to the topic. You should be aware of this when you are ending a section and beginning a new one. You must prepare your reader for each new step in your argument.

If, for example, you were **linking** the section on language and imagery in Outline (a) with the section on sonnet conventions, you could do it with a short link like this:

Harwood chooses the sonnet as a literary manifestation of the social stereotyping to which the woman at the centre of the poem has fallen victim. She uses the conventions and connotations of the form to produce a negative of the picture it presented.

As surely as Harwood's female subject is placed in a frame by her domestic role, so the Elizabethan sonnet situated its female subject as a stereotype. There were exceptions, but in most cases, the mistress of the Elizabethan sonnet was painted in standard colours of red and white, and was icy cold and distant to her fiery hot lover. * It almost paints the 'ideal' woman in miniature. The sonnet - the artificial love-poem par excellence - is a fitting vehicle (used ironically) to present a very graphic picture of a loveless housewife. (*You would need to use at least one example and give the appropriate citation.)

'Through-lines'. (This is not always possible, but it can be very useful. Try to think of an image or motif - tied closely to the text - for YOUR piece of work. Don't go overboard, but sometimes it's refreshing for the marker to know that you've put a little creative energy into this critical piece). The idea of painting might work well in this essay.

What NOT to do if you can avoid it. Don't just analyse the poem from line one to the end (or the novel or the film from the beginning to the end). Find another way to attack the question.

What is a Good Essay?

It is not possible to write a general formula for **'the good essay'**, but in general good essays have these characteristics in common:

- they have a **positive direction** or argument (that is, from the introductory paragraphs, the reader or marker knows where the essay is going);
- they are **well-expressed**;

- they show that the student has thought about, and made a **determined effort to attack, the question**;
- they are **well-organised**, again showing evidence of having been taken through several drafts;
- they show an ability to **use the text** or texts set as evidence in their arguments.
- the best essays usually combine an **intelligent argument** which shows some depth of **thinking on the part of the student**, with an **awareness of the critical discussion on the text**.

Citation and Bibliography

Which System? In English Studies, We Use New MLA

The New MLA style (author/page) system followed by a List of Works Cited at the end of the essay, is used by most Arts and Humanities disciplines, is easy to learn and avoids much of the unnecessary baggage of the old footnote system. When you use this system, you must ensure that there is a properly completed List of Works Cited at the end of the essay.

Every English major should own a copy of the MLA

Handbook, which provides all you need to know about citation and bibliography in this discipline, as well as information about writing academic essays. It is available from the Union Bookshop.

Notes And Author Citations:

In a citation or reference, you acknowledge the contribution other writers have made to your work. This is not merely a matter of etiquette; it is a legal requirement of any writer. If you do not acknowledge your debt to another writer, you are guilty of plagiarism.

If all you want to do is indicate to your reader the source of an idea or a quotation you may do it internally in your text.

Citations are like the filing-system for your essay; they are where you keep the record of your research. Correct and complete referencing is an essential research tool, because it is through references that you and your reader can trace your research. If you want to go back to a critic, or your reader wants to read further to see a point more clearly, the reference is the starting place. If you need more material on a point a critic or theorist has made, you begin with the reference and go back to the original.

If you want to expand on a point, or make a point you feel is slightly outside the scope of your main argument but still relevant

and interesting in the context of your paper, you use a footnote. You reference the footnote the same way you would reference the body of the text.

Acknowledging Quotations from the Primary Text for Study.

When you are quoting directly from the text on which your topic is based and it is obvious that you are doing so, only a simple reference is needed.

If, for example, you are writing a tutorial paper on David Williamson's play, *The Perfectionist*, your reference would look like this:

- The joy of grandchildren's photos as far as Jack is concerned is to search for signs of his own features, so he was a little disappointed (32).
- (Note: the full stop goes after the reference).
- In plays that have Act and Scene divisions, cite act, scene and line number. If the quotation comes from Act one, Scene three, line 123, your bracketed reference will be: (1.3.123). There is no need to use Roman numerals.

New MLA Style

Citation

A typical page from a student essay using NEW MLA referencing (MLA Handbook 264-65).

In studying the influences of Latin American, African, and Asian music on modern American composers, music historians tend to discuss such figures as Aaron Copland, George Gershwin, Henry Cowell, Alan Hovhaness, and John Cage (Brindle: Griffiths 104-39: Hitchcock 173-58). They usually overlook Duke Ellington, whom Gunther Schuller rightly calls "one of America's great composers" (318), probably because they are familiar only with Ellington's popular pieces, like "Sophisticated Lady," "Mood Indigo," and "Solitude." Still little known are the many ambitious orchestral suites Ellington composed, several of which, such as Black, Brown, and Beige (originally entitled The African Suite), The Liberian Suite, The Far East Suite, The Latin American Suite, and Afro-Eurasian Eclipse, explore his impressions of the people, places, and music of other countries

Not all music critics, however, have ignored Ellington's

excursions into longer musical forms. In the 1950s, for example, while Ellington was still alive, Raymond Horricks compared him with Ravel, Delius, and Debussy:

The continually enquiring mind of Ellington . . . has sought to extend steadily the imaginative boundaries of the musical form on which it subsists... Ellington since the mid 1930s has been engaged upon extending both the imagery and the formal construction of written jazz. (122-23

(The following section is extracted from the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, edited by Joseph Gibaldi. Fourth Edition. New York: MLA, 1995. 104-105.) Chapter 4 of the *Handbook* provides a detailed guide to documentation and citation.

In MLA documentation style, you acknowledge your sources by keying brief parenthetical citations in your text to an alphabetical list of works that appears at the end of the paper. The parenthetical citation that appears at the end of the following sentence is typical of MLA style:

Ancient writers attributed the invention of the monochord to Pythagoras, who lived in the 6th century BC (Marcuse 197).

The citation "(Marcuse 197)" tells readers that the information in the sentence was derived from page 197 of a work by an author named Marcuse. If readers want more information about this source, they can turn to the works cited list where, under the name Marcuse, they would find the following information:
Marcuse, Sibyl, *A Survey of Musical Instruments*. New York: Harper, 1975.

A citation in MLA style contains only enough information to enable readers to find the source in the works-cited list. If the author's name is mentioned in the text, only the page number appears in the citation.

(Using the above sentence, you could cite Marcuse this way:
Marcuse notes that ancient writers attributed the invention of the monochord to Pythagoras, who lived in the 6th century (197).)

The List Of Works Cited

The LIST OF WORKS CITED, or BIBLIOGRAPHY is a list of all the works that have contributed ideas or information to your paper. Every reference in your paper should be traceable through this list.

List names alphabetically. The first page of the "Works Cited" List from the Duke Ellington essay, (New MLA) would look like this:

Works Cited

- Brindle, Reginald Smith. "The Search Outwards: The Orient, Jazz, Archaisms." *The New Music: The Avant-Garde Since 1945*. New York: Oxford UP, 1975. 133-45.
- Burnett, Jamez. "Ellington's Place as a Composer." *Gammond* 141-55.
- Ellington, Duke. *Afro-Eurasian Eclipse*. 1971. Fantasy, 1991.
- . *Black Brown, and Beige*. 1945. RCA Bluebird, 1988.
- . *The Far East Suite*. LP. RCA, 1965.
- . *The Latin American Suite*. 1969. Fantasy, 1990.
- . *The Liberian Suite*. LP. Philips, 1947.
- . *Music Is My Mistress*. 1973. New York: Da Capo, 1976.
- Gammond, Peter, ed. *Duke Ellington: His Life and Music*. 1958. New York: Da Capo, 1977.
- Griffiths, Paul. *A Concise History of Avant-Garde Music: From Debussy to Boulez*. New York: Oxford UP, 1978.
- Haase, John Edward. *Beyond Category: The Life and Genius of Duke Ellington*. Fwd.
- Wynton Marsalis. New York: Simon, 1993.
- Hitchcock, H. Wiley. *Music in the United States: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice, 1974.
- Horricks, Raymond. "The Orchestral Suites." *Gammond* 122-31.
- Rattenbury, Ken. *Duke Ellington, Jazz Composer*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1990 .
- Schuller, Gunther. *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development*. New York: Oxford UP, 1968.
- Southern, Eileen. *The Music of Black Americans: A History*. 2nd ed. New York: Norton, 1983.
- Tucker, Mark, ed. *The Duke Ellington Reader*. New York: Oxford UP, 1993.
- . *Ellington: The Early Years*. Urbana: U of Illinois P, 1991.

A Filmography

A Filmography is a list of the films you have studied for your paper. These are arranged in alphabetical order by title, and if you have studied two movies with the same title (as in the case of a remake, for example), these are listed in date order:

Like Water for Chocolate [Como agua para chocolate].
Screenplay by Laura Esquivel. Dir. Alfonso Arau. Perf. Lumi Cavazos, Marco Lombardi, and Regina Torne. Miramax, 1993.

Psycho. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Anthony Perkins, Vera Miles, John Gavin, Janet Leigh. Prod. US, Shamley/Alfred Hitchcock, 1960.

A Star is Born. Dir. William Wellman. Perf. Janet Gaynor and Fredric March. US, David O. Selznick, 1937.

A Star is Born. Dir. Frank Pierson. Perf. Barbra Streisand and Kris Kristofferson. US, Warner/Barwood/First Artists, 1976.

Note: Although you list titles alphabetically according to words other than A, An or The, you must still include those words in the title. So *Psycho* comes before *A Star is Born*, but you do not write Star is Born

Television, Radio, CD-ROMS And Online Databases In The List Of Works Cited

A Television or radio program. Some examples from the 1995 *MLA Handbook*, 168-69.

The information should be cited in this order:

1. Title of the episode or segment, if appropriate (in inverted commas)
2. Title of the program (underlined or in italics)
3. Title of the series, (e.g. Masterpiece Theatre) if any, without underlining or parentheses.

Examples:

"*Frankenstein: the Making of the Monster*." Great Books. Narr. Donald Sutherland. Writ. Eugenie Vink. Dir. Jonathan Ward. Learning Channel. 8 Sept. 1993.

"Frederick Douglass." *Civil War Journal*. Narr. Danny Glover. Dir. Craig Haffner. Arts and Entertainment Network. 6 Apr. 1993.

Middlemarch. By George Eliot. Adapt. Andrew Davies. Dir. Anthony Pope. Perf. Juliet Aubrey and Patrick Malahide. 6 episodes. Masterpiece Theatre. Introd. Russell Baker. PBS. WGBH, Boston. 10 Apr. -15 May 1994.

If your paper is on the work of a particular individual, cite the person's name before the name of the work. If your essay was on Andrew Davies, the last reference would look like this example:

Davies, Andrew, adapt. *Middlemarch*. By George Eliot. Dir. Anthony Pope. Perf. Juliet Aubrey and Patrick Malahide. 6 episodes. Masterpiece Theatre. Introd. Russell Baker. PBS. WGBH, Boston. 10

Apr. - 15 May 1994.

CD-ROMS And Other Portable Databases

Some examples from the 1995 *MLA Handbook*, 153-59.

Material Accessed from Periodical Databases

(a) Material with Publication Information for a Printed Source.

Here your entry should be presented in the following order:

- Author's name (if given);
- Publication information for the printed source, including title and date of print publication;
- Title of the database (underlined or italicised)
- Publication medium (CD-ROM)
- Name of the vendor, if relevant.
- Electronic Publication date.

If you cannot find all the information required, cite the information available. For example:

Angier, Natalie. "Chemists Learn Why Vegetables Are Good for You." *New York Times* 13 Apr. 1993, late ed.: C1. *New York Times Ondisc*. CD-ROM. UMI-Proquest. Oct. 1993.

Galloway, Stephen. "TV Takes the Fall in Violence Poll." *Hollywood Reporter* 23 July, 1993: 16. Predicasts F and S Plus Text: United States. DC-ROM. SilverPlatter. Oct. 1993.

Guidelines for Family Television Viewing. Urbana: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Educ., 1990. ERIC. CD-ROM. SilverPlatter. June 1993.

(b) Material with No Printed Source specified. For example:

Shearson Lehman Brothers, Inc. "Reebok: Company Report." 29 July 1993. *General Business File*. CD-ROM. Information Access. Dec. 1993.

"U.S. Population by Age: Urban and Urbanised Areas." 1990 *U.S. Census of Population and Housing*. CD-ROM. U.S. Bureau of the Census. 1990.

Non-Periodical Publication On CD-Rom. Examples:
The CIA World Factbook. CD-ROM. Minneapolis. Quanta, 1992.

English Poetry: Full-Text Database. Rel. 2. CD-ROM.
Cambridge, Eng.: Chadwyck, 1993.
The Oxford English Dictionary. 2nd ed. CD-ROM. Oxford:
Oxford UP. 1992.

If you are citing only a part of the work, state which part, and if necessary, enclose it in inverted commas. Example:
"Albatross." *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. CD-ROM.
Oxford: Oxford UP. 1992.

A Publication On Diskette

Cite a diskette publication as you would a book, but add a description of the medium of publication. Examples:

Alpha Four. Vers. 3.0. Diskette. Burlington: Alpha, 1993.
"Ellison, Ralph." *Disclitt: American Authors*. Diskette. Boston:
Hall. 1991.

A Work In More Than One Publication Medium Example:
Franking, Holly. *Negative Space: A Computerised Video Novel*.
Vers. 1.0. Diskette, videocassette. Prairie Village: Diskotech,
1990.

Citing Online Databases

Some examples from the 1995 *MLA Handbook*, 160-67.

Material With Publication Information For A Printed Source Or Printed Analogue (Accessed Through A Computer Service)

Examples:

Angier, Natalie. "Chemists Learn Why Vegetables are Good for You." *New York Times* 13 Apr. 1993, late ed.: C1. New York Times Online. Online. Nexis. 10 Feb. 1994.

Galloway, Stephen. "TV Takes the Fall in Violence Poll." *Hollywood Reporter* 13 July 1993: 16. PTS F and S Indexes. Online. Dialog. 14 Jan. 1994.

Guidelines for Family Television Viewing. Urbana: ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Educ., 1990. ERIC. Online. BRS. 22 Nov. 1993.

Material With No Printed Source Or Printed Analogue (Accessed Through A Computer Service) Examples:

Glicken, Morley D. "A Five-Step Plan to Renew Your Creativity." *National Business Employment Weekly*. Online. Dow Jones News Retrieval. 10 Nov, 1992.

"Middle Ages." *Academic American Encyclopedia*. Online. Prodigy. 30 Mar. 1992.

Material from Electronic Journals, Electronic NEWSletters and Electronic Conferences. (Accessed through a Computer Network). Examples:

Alston, Robin. "The Battle of the Books." *Humanist* 7.0176 (10 Sept. 1993): 10pp. Online. Internet. 10 Oct. 1993.

Lindsay, Robert K. "Electronic Journals of Proposed Research." *Ejournal* 1.1(1991): n. pag. Online. Internet. 10 Apr. 1991.

An Electronic Text. Examples:

Hardy, Thomas, *Far from the Madding Crowd*. Ed. Ronald Blythe. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978. Online. Oxford Text Archive. Internet. 24 Jan. 1994.

Octovian. Ed. Frances McSparran. Early English Text Soc. 289. London: Oxford UP, 1986. Online. U of Virginia Lib. Internet. 6 Apr. 1994.

United States. General Accounting Office. *Drug-Exposed Infants: Report to the Chairman, Committee on Finance, U.S. Senate*. 6 Nov. 1992. Online. U of Minnesota Lib. Internet. 1 May 1993.

(At the end of the entry you may add as supplementary information the electronic address you used to access the document. Precede the address with the word: "Available").
Example:

Octovian. Ed. Frances McSparran. Early English Text Soc. 289. London: Oxford UP, 1986. Online. U of Virginia Lib. Internet. 6 Apr. 1994. Available FTP: etext. Virginia.edu.

CITING HTTP, FTP, E-MAIL

The following references have been taken from:

Walker, Janice R. "MLA-Style Citations of Electronic Sources."

Version 1.1, January, 1995. Revised, August, 1996.

<http://www.cas.usf.edu/english/walker/mla.html>

(Please note: as there are no page numbers available, acknowledgement will be made in this case by the author's name only).

Walker gives an easy-to-follow general formula for this type of citation:

Author's last name, Author's first name. "Title of Document." Title of complete work (if applicable). Version or file number, if applicable. Document date, or date of last revision (if different from access date). Protocol and address, access path or directories (date of access).

FTP (File Transfer Protocol) Sites

To cite files available for downloading via ftp, use the following example (from Walker) as a guide:

Bruckman, Amy. "Approaches to Managing Deviant Behaviour in Virtual Communities." Apr. 1994.

<ftp://ftp.media.mit.edu/pub/asb/papers/deviance-chi94.txt> (4 Dec. 1994).

Websites

(Available via Lynx, Netscape and other Web Browsers)

To cite files available for downloading via the World Wide Web, use the following example (from Walker) as a guide:

Burka, Lauren P. "A Hypertext History of Multi-user Dimensions." The MUDdex. 1993.

<http://www.apocalypse.org/pub/u/lpb/muddex/essay/> (5 Dec. 1994).

Gopher Sites

Use this example from Walker as a guide to citing information found using gopher search protocols:

"The Netoric Project."

<gopher://kairos.daedalus.com:70/00ftp%3APub%3ACW%3ANETORIC%3A-Welcome->(13 Jan. 1996).

E-mail, Listserv and Newlist Citations

Walker uses the following examples:

Bruckman, Amy S. "MOOSE Crossing Proposal."
mediamoo@media.mit.edu (20 Dec. 1994).

Seabrook, Richard H.C. "Community and Progress."
cibermind@jefferson.village.virginia.edu (22 Jan. 1994).

Thomson, Harry. "Virtual Reality." Personal e-mail (25 Jan. 1995).
(Note: for personal e-mail citations, omit the e-mail address.)

Note: Works should be arranged in strict alphabetical order according to the author's name. When the author's name is unknown, works should be listed by the first word in the title other than A, An or The. The Concise Oxford Dictionary is listed under "C".

Always Include A List Of Works Cited Or a Filmography.

Even when you are using only one text, (one novel, one film or television episode or an anthology of poetry), you must still add a bibliography or filmography to your essay and cite the one text.

Useful links:

Australian Academy of Humanities: <http://www.humanities.org.au/>
Colloquy: <http://colloquy.monash.edu.au/>
Austlit: <http://www.austlit.edu.au/>