

Best of Four

Volume 5

Student Voices

A Commonwealth College Publication

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How to Use This Magazine

Welcome to the fifth volume of *Best of Four*. We hope you enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to you.

The purpose of *Best of Four* is to bring the best writing produced in English 004 each fall semester to the widest audience possible. Our students have important stories to tell and powerful voices to be heard. The students who read these essays will learn that they too have permission to state what is important to them in a public voice.

In addition to inspiring our students, we also hope the magazine will direct them to the sources they will need to access, if they are to achieve mastery of the written language: their teachers, their handbooks, and their fellow students.

In several instances through the magazine we have placed hints and friendly advice and, on occasion, some direction concerning a few usage matters. Basic skill students have difficulty with mechanics, punctuation and usage. That's why they are basic skills students. However, at the college level we are mostly concerned with organization, development, and the assumption of a tone appropriate for a college audience. Throughout the magazine we remind students to examine their handbooks on a regular basis. Almost all questions can be answered there.

Nevertheless, some knowledge and skill level is required to make the best use of a handbook, and some handbooks are clearer about specific information than others. Students need to read their handbooks, perform exercises in them and seek assistance whenever possible. The biggest shortcoming among freshmen students—and this is universally true—is their unwillingness to seek help whenever possible.

Nowhere is that help more user friendly than that which can be found in The Learning Center. Every student needs to find this out as soon as possible.

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What's New

When we began *Best of Four* five years ago, it was the intention of the English faculty on the Hazleton campus to use the publication as a flagship, leading to student publications for each of the next two levels of composition within the Penn State system—a “best of freshman composition” and a “best of 202” as it were. We still haven't achieved that goal, but along the way we have found that other campuses were interested in the project, and after our second edition we began to suggest to the campuses within the Commonwealth College that we were open to submissions from their students as well. This edition marks the first in which the *Best of Four* has become a Commonwealth College publication with the inclusion of essays from students at the Scranton-Worthington campus. We hope that the sixth edition will include essays from all twelve of the College's campuses so that the publication will reach the broadest readership possible and contain work representative of the broadest range of student writing.

At this point we wish to offer a special thank you to Carol Ann Ellis for her contribution as a faculty editor on this and the previous issue of *Best of Four*. Her work has been invaluable, and we wish her the very best of luck on all her future endeavors.

HIGH SCHOOL TO COLLEGE: Making the Transition

Andrew Makhoul

AS WE GROW UP, there are many changes we go through. These can range from moving from one home to another, to going through puberty, to matriculating from high school to college. Although college requires a significant transition from high school, there are similarities in course work, social behavior, and technology.

The educational goals of high schools are similar to those of colleges. The goal of all schools is to provide a quality education. Classrooms in college are still set up similarly to those in high school. Desks and chairs for students are usually lined in rows, facing the teacher in the front of the room. From there, teachers, who either stand or sit on their desks (which are always much larger than the students' desks), lecture to us. Lecturing is just one of many teaching styles both college professors and high school teachers use. Some teachers use a group-work approach to teaching. In this case, students work together in smaller groups, sometimes referred to as teams. They then may be required to give presentations or to submit work together on a project. College and high school instructors share teaching methods. However, in larger colleges and universities, professors tend to prefer the lecture method of teaching because of the large classes.

One difference between high school and college is how attendance is taken. In most college classrooms, professors do not require attendance as part of the course grade. Students in high school, however, are required to attend classes and can actually be punished not only academically, but also through a disciplinary action such as suspension. In most states, students are required to attend school, by law. Of course this is not true at the college level, and the fact that students are not required to attend class or even attend school at all quickly affects the student's attitudes about his or her responsibility towards learning.

High schools and colleges hold similar social events such as dances, concerts, and other community events. The events are usually sponsored or run by a student organization. During a freshman's first week of college, the social events are more prevalent so students can meet people right away. This will fade quickly as the time progresses. College students are more mature than typical high school students, or they can be just as immature, if not worse. Depending on the size of the college, gossip spreads similar to how it does in high school.

In larger colleges, it is hard to even recognize someone's name, whereas in high school, most names are recognizable. This can be a problem when students are running for leadership positions or things such as homecoming king or queen.

President William Jefferson Clinton has spent ample time and money working on providing enough up-to-date computers into all high schools. However, there are many high schools that haven't reached this point. Almost all colleges have a computer lab offered to students for reasons such as research, email, and recreational purposes.

Even the high schools that do have computers to offer students don't offer email for their students. High schools tend to see email as a distraction from studies rather than a way of communicating within the school's network. College professors use email as a way to contact students about any upcoming classroom events or class cancellations. A college student's advisor will also send important notifications to advisees using email.

Despite any similarities or differences between high schools and colleges, we can assume that it all depends on where we went to high school and which college we are planning to attend. However, generally speaking, although there is an important transition from college to high school, there are many similarities as well.

IGNORING PROBLEMS CREATES MORE!

Ashley Morris

IGNORING PROBLEMS, eventually causes them to catch up to us and turns them into bigger problems. For example: A girl wakes up every day and goes over to her friend's house because she does not want to go to school. She lies to her mother (and herself) when she tells her mom that she is going to school. Every morning, she takes a shower, gathers her books and climbs on the school bus. Her mom believes that she is going to school, because her mom trusts her daughter to tell the truth. Her friend has written letters to the teacher, signing her mother's name, saying that she cannot come to school because she has been in an accident. One day the teacher calls the girl's house and asks for her mother. While her mother is talking to the teacher, the girl knows that she is in trouble, so she quickly thinks of another lie to cover up the first lie. Her mom and teacher now know that this girl has been lying and they do not trust her.

The real reason why the girl did not want to go to school is because she had been teased by her other classmates for looking and acting differently from them. Instead of trying to solve her problem and make some friends, she ran away from her problem, which created an even bigger problem.

Many people think that if the problem is too troubling or too difficult, they can hide from the problem and things will be better. Things may seem better for a short while, but eventually those problems are going to come back, because they were never resolved. What are these people going to do when they have to face the problems they have been avoiding and their present problems at the same time? If they would have taken care of their problems when they occurred then they could handle the problems that will occur in the future.

Another example of running from problems that is common for college-age people is cheating on one's mate

or girlfriend or boyfriend, and lying about it. Eventually those of us who do this are discovered and when that happens we end up alone. If we had told our partners that we had cheated the first time we might have had a chance to be forgiven.

Solving problems makes people stronger. It is better to face problems as they come and not push them away, because in the future they will return and just turn into bigger, more complicated problems.



HANG IN THERE

Brad Hart

I USED TO WATCH Jose Canseco, Mark Mcguire, Nolan Ryan, and Lenny Dysktra on television. These men were my role models. They were my favorite athletes in baseball, and they inspired me to play. I told myself, “Brad one day you will be a great ball player just like them.” When I was in tee-ball my dream was to play in the majors.

The first time I played baseball, I was six years old. I remember being only as tall as the tee. No matter how hard I tried to hit the ball, it seemed I never would. When I finally did hit the ball, I jumped up and down and waddled down to first base. It must have been the funniest thing that anyone had ever seen. On the defensive side, I played in right field. I never really paid much attention to the game. I was always too busy running in circles, jumping into the air, or rolling on the ground. When the ball was hit to me, I stood and looked at it for a while. Seconds later I realized that I was supposed to pick it up and throw it to the second baseman. Unable to reach my target, I grabbed the ball and ran it to second base. This behavior continued throughout the season. Yet when my team won, I remember my parents cheering me on and the crowd going wild. That entire year was exciting for me, and I learned how to play the game.

Two years passed, and it was time for me to move up to the minor league. It was terrifying at first, considering that I was one of the smallest players in the league and my coach was now pitching the ball to us. When it was my turn to bat, I just stood at the plate, shocked and stunned. It was a very strange experience for me. My hands became moist with sweat, and my knees shook as I awaited the pitch. The coach threw the ball, and I jumped out of the way.

Upon seeing this, the coach pulled me aside and


explained to me that I need not be afraid. He said to “Hang in there and take a swing at the ball” as soon as it crossed the plate. I took his advice and ended up hitting the ball right to the third baseman. I ran as fast as I could to get to first base, but for some reason, it seemed farther than I remembered and I did not make it. The coach just shrugged and told me to “Get them next time.” Throughout the season, I played a new position—second base. It was difficult because I had to be ready to act at all times and pay special attention to where the runner was. Over time, I improved my hitting the ball and my defensive skills as well. This was just the beginning of my baseball career.

Little league was the happiest time of my life, but I lost interest in the game due to fierce competition and negative parental involvement. As I grew older the game was not as much fun as it had been. It became too serious. We had to play to win, and losing was not an option. At the completion of Little League, I chose to play for only one more year. I hated it, so I decided to quit, and I have not picked up a baseball since.



NATE

Brandi Saveri

 WALKING THE HALLS of Nazareth Area High School I could hear the voices of many friends yelling, “Hey Nate, how are you today?” coming from all directions. Nate was a popular student who was friendly to everyone. It was Nate’s senior year in high school, and he was a star wrestler on the varsity team. He was recruited by Penn State University with a wrestling scholarship.

On Friday night, one month before graduation, a small party consisting of Nate and his friends were gathered outside of Jason’s house. They were drinking and just having some of what they thought was innocent fun before the end of the year. The high-pitched sound of police sirens arose from all directions. They thought nothing of it at the time, but it turned out that the party was about to be broken up by the police.

As the sirens came closer, everyone took off running, including Nate and three of his closest friends. They ran through a back yard, which turns into a wide-open field near a creek. Nate somehow lost his friends out in the field, but he kept running in the fear of being caught. It was pitch dark outside, and he did not know which direction or where he was running. Before he knew it he ran into a steel chain, with one side hanging unattached to the fence. The chain had been put up to block access to a steep cliff near the edge of the creek. He was running so fast that he could not stop himself, and he fell down the side of the cliff. Nate was screaming, but no one heard him. He fell into the creek and hit his head on a rock at the bottom.

“Nate, Nate, are you out there?” his friends yelled. All were accounted for except Nate. Where could he be, everyone wondered? It was late and dark out, so

they thought he had found another way home. The next day Nate’s phone rang. It was one of his friends asking if he was home. Nate’s mother told his friend that he had not come home the previous night. His friends went back to the big field and started to look for him. They looked and looked, but they could not find him anywhere. However, they did not look everywhere. They knew exactly where he was. They were frightened to see what they knew would be the body of their best friend. Finally, they went down the cliff, and as they walked down they saw Nate. He had drowned in the creek. It was an awful thing for them to see. They had nightmares about it for months. Every time they closed their eyes they saw his dead body lying there.

The following Monday an announcement was made over the loud speaker by our principal. During the next few days, school was pointless. When I walked down the halls everyone was crying, remembering Nate and how they missed him. It was one of the most difficult things we had to go through together. True, we had heard about accidents happening at other schools, but no one thought it would ever happen in Nazareth. We did not want to face the truth. The school set up counselors to talk to us when we were upset. We were constantly reminded of all the good things he had done, and the fun we had with him. But no matter how much we tried, the sad and guilty feelings would not go away. The whole school was invited to attend the funeral. It was no surprise when many of his friends showed up. His family was grateful for everyone’s attendance at the service, but in a way were even more saddened by the loss of their son and his bright future. It made them happy to see all the supportive, but sad faces.

The evening of May 28, 1998 approached; senior prom was a happy day and very memorable evening. Nate however was not forgotten at his senior prom. All of his friends dedicated the prom song “Remember Me,” the theme song from *Casper*, to him. We all danced around in a big circle together, wishing he were there. A few weeks later it was time for graduation, a very sad day. Nate’s name was called as part of the graduating class of 1998. Even though he was not there in body he was there in spirit. The saddest thing of all was the fact that after graduation all his classmates went out drinking. I guess they did not learn anything from this awful experience.

Just like everyone else, I never thought I would have to go through high school facing such a tragic event. I was just like the rest of them, thinking nothing will ever happen in Nazareth. The fact remains it did happen. All I could think about was what his family was going through. As for all of his friends, I feel no sympathy. Anyone who has the nerve to go out and drink after a friend died from an alcohol related accident deserves no sympathy.



Colons

A **colon** introduces a list; however, be sure that the group of words that precedes the colon is an independent clause:

“I like the three most popular sports: baseball, basketball, and bowling.”

The sentence—“The three sports I like best are baseball, basketball, and bowling”—does NOT require a colon. The linking verb “are” serves the same purpose.

Colons are *never* used between prepositions and their objects either, even when the object of a preposition is a list, as in the sentence “My mother is very fond of roses, violets, and daffodils.”

Colons are also used as coordinate conjunctions between independent clauses when a second clause is a subset of the first clause: “Professor Smith has strict rules about classroom deportment: she insists that all male students remove their hats on entering the classroom.”

Semi-colons

A **semi-colon** is used to join words and is a coordinate conjunction. We use them to join independent clauses as in “Professor O’Donnell teaches the Women’s Studies course; she is also in charge of advising.”

A **semi-colon** is used to join items in a series when those items contain commas within them as in “Professor Jimenez teaches geometry, a difficult subject to master; algebra, a subject not as difficult to master; and trigonometry, a subject about which I have no knowledge at all.”

THE BEST BIRTHDAY IS THE SIXTEENTH

Brent Heimbach

MOST PEOPLE REMEMBER the first time they experimented with alcohol. For me, it was a very interesting time. It was on my sixteenth birthday, and my family threw a party with fifty friends and family members, for me. Earlier that day I went with my dad to pick up some last minute items for the party. As we were driving through town my dad decided to stop at the local beer distributor to buy some beer for all my relatives at the party. I never expected some of the alcohol was going to be for me.

The party started out like most birthday parties do with the opening of presents, the ceremonial blowing out of the candles, and the dinner. After all the presents were opened and the cake was cut, the real party began. My dad had purchased a half-barrel of beer for the party. When I was taking a soda out of the cooler that was near the beer, my dad motioned for me to come over. He handed me a cup and began to pour the rich creamy ale into it. I never expected that cup was for me until he said, "Drink up, Son, it's your birthday." So I slowly lifted the cup to my mouth and began to drink the beer. After all my uncles were finished filling their glasses, my dad pulled me aside and began to tell me the fun and dangers of drinking. Then he gave me a smile and said to go and have fun.

I did have fun drinking and felt like one of the adults until I went to bed. As soon as my head began to fall back onto my pillow, the spinning began. I thought that the spinning would eventually fade away and stop. Moments later I was hanging over the toilet. I could not imagine being that sick. I stayed at the toilet for quite a long time.

My parents and a few relatives were still up and drinking. My mom came into the house to check and see if I was all right. She entered the bathroom and asked me some

questions to see if I was okay. My only response to her was another trip to the toilet. She handed me a glass of water and told me to drink it because it would make me feel better later. She sat with me for a while and her motherly instincts kicked in. She rubbed my back and told me to get it all out. After I was finished throwing up, she helped me to my room and watched as I fell asleep.

The next morning I woke up with a headache and a pain in my stomach muscles from being sick all night. I walked into the kitchen to pour a drink of water or juice. My parents were standing by the coffee pot. They began to laugh and asked me if I had a rough night. I smiled and then began to ask them if this happens every time someone drinks. They told me it only happens when a person has entirely too much to drink.

I spent the entire day on the couch sleeping and watching television. I asked my dad why he had let me drink last night, and he told me that he wanted me to drink with him for the first time so I would not do something stupid while I was drunk. He then told me that I would be allowed to drink at future parties at home and with my friends. The only stipulation was that I would not get in a car with someone who was drinking or try to drive a car after I was drinking. I agreed and have been drinking ever since.

At first I did not know if I ever wanted to drink again. The feeling of being drunk was fun, but the feeling after too many drinks was one that I did not wish to experience again. For a couple of weeks every time I smelled beer I felt a little sick, but that feeling eventually went away. Ever since the day that I talked with my dad I never got in a car with anyone who was drunk. My dad gave me a very important responsibility that night, and I really try to accept that responsibility and take it very seriously.

SHARING THE BREAD OF ANGELS

Christa Sist

IN DECEMBER TWENTY-FOURTH, Christmas Eve, my family begins the holiday celebration by preparing for our holy dinner. First, the table is set. An extra setting is reserved at the table symbolizing that Christ is the unseen guest in our home. The kitchen door is left partially open so that Christ may enter. The dinner does not begin until the first star is seen in the sky.

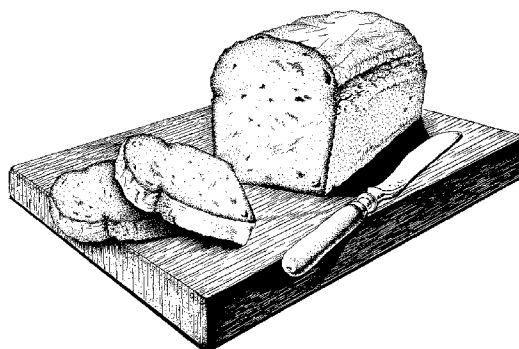
I continue looking out the window for the first star. Once the first star is seen we bake bread. We follow Jesus' behavior from his Last Supper during which he blessed the bread and shared it with his disciples. This is a custom, which in our family is centuries old. The bread is sometimes referred to as bread of Angels. Through the bread we are reminded of the Holy Nativity. We remember that Jesus Christ was born in Bethlehem, which literally means "House of Bread." The breaking and sharing of the Christmas bread is our way of showing best wishes to family and friends accompanied by expressions of forgiveness.

Next, we light two bayberry candles. An old family legend has it that the burning of the candles during the Yuletide season would bring wealth and good luck throughout the New Year. It is very important not to blow the candles out. They must burn completely and extinguish themselves. Now, it is time to eat. Our meal consists of haddock, whiting, smelt fish mushroom soup, babalki, alio, and pirogues. Pirogues are a triangular shaped dough filled with potato and cheese. Babalki are little yeast dumplings best when served with sour kraut or poppy seed. Alio is spaghetti with oil, garlic, and anchovies. This meal is a combination of ethnic dishes from both my father and mother's families. My mother is Polish and my

father is Slovak and Italian.

When we are finished with our dinner. My family decorates the Christmas tree. The decorations for the tree have been collected over the years. Most of the ornaments were made by family members and have unique sentimental value. We often tell the story behind each ornament as we put them on the tree. The ornament I like best is the white angel. My grandmother and I made it out of a thimble. This is one of my favorite things about Christmas. I love having my family around, sharing memories. We also use this time to remember our loved ones who are no longer with us

After the tree is decorated we dress ourselves for mass. At ten o'clock we walk down the street to St. Michael's church to attend mass. When mass is ended we go home, and sing Christmas carols. My grandmother plays the piano, and my mother, aunts, sisters, and I sing Christmas carols. While we are singing my father and brother and uncles play cards in the kitchen. Then we go to bed, waiting anxiously for Christmas day. Christmas morning we wake up bright and early to open presents from Santa Claus. When the presents are all opened we go to my grandparents to eat dinner. When we are done eating we play games and just relax.



TRAGEDY IN THE NIGHT

Danielle Gehman

I WAS BROUGHT UP in a depressed town for most of my childhood and teenage years. When I became thirteen my mother discussed drinking with me and told me to be responsible and not to drink under the legal age. Even though I was brought up in an ethical and wonderful family, my curiosity became overwhelming to me, and that is when I drank alcohol for the first time.

In my town, when we turned fifteen years of age, we are pressured by our peers to drink with everyone. However, I didn't become curious or even try it until I was seventeen years old. My friend and I were just hanging out, talking, and laughing when some of my other friends showed up at my house with alcohol. How they received the alcohol I couldn't say. I started drinking many mixed and hard liquor drinks and my friends were drinking beer and hard liquor. I didn't become drunk, but the others were fairly tipsy to the point where they couldn't walk. Even though I didn't become drunk I still had a good time, but the next day was awful. Yet that still didn't stop me from drinking the next time. I went drinking many times after that and I had a fun time doing so.

Until recently I loved drinking and having fun with my friends, but something happened that turned me off from drinking. I will never drink again, at least not as hard as I did. One night I was driving home from a party, and I was behind a friend of mine. I had no idea that he had gone to the party earlier and was very drunk when he left, until he started swerving around the road. I became worried when other cars were coming in our direction. I kept a safe distance knowing that was all I could do and hoped for the best. My friend must have passed out behind the wheel and his foot become heavy on the pedal. His car became faster as it swerved into the lane heading right

for the oncoming car. This was happening so fast I could do nothing but watch.

He hit the car head on, and all I heard was a loud screeching of the tires, busting, crashing and shattering glass. I saw flashes of lights until there was nothing left of the headlights. I was far enough behind to avoid the crash, but it still shook me up. I hit the brakes, stopped and jumped out of the car to see if I could help. All I saw was twisted steel, busted glass, and blood all over the car, or what was left of the cars.

As I grabbed my car phone to call the paramedics, I heard people moaning in excruciating pain. The paramedics showed up ten minutes later, which seemed a very long time to me and probably to the victims too. There was nothing I could do, but stand there, watch, and pray with all my might.

It turned out my friend had died on impact, literally crushed to death. The other victims in the oncoming car were severely injured and in critical condition. They were coming home from their honeymoon. Both of them survived, but it shattered their lives. They had many months of rehabilitation and hard work ahead of them. As for me, I was shattered emotionally, mentally, and physically after I witnessed that, and I became very depressed. I had to take anti-depressants and received therapy for what I had witnessed. I had to overcome everything I saw. Today I am better, but what I saw that night will always be in my memory. Alcohol may be fun, but it can be very dangerous. Due to that incident I will never drink again. I will never regret drinking alcohol for the first time. I had a blast; however, I will never take drinking as having fun ever again.

MY GRANDFATHER

David Smith

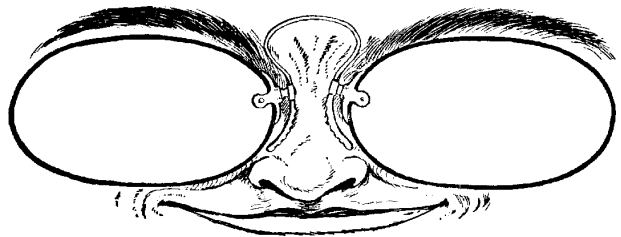
IN A WARM, early spring May morning, my six feet, gray haired grandfather with a protruding belly slowly and nervously walks into the bustling Wilkes Barre Scranton airport. He is an older man who has trouble breathing because of the emphysema that is slowly taking over his productive life. Quickly he hurries over to join the others who are patiently waiting in the long line to check in for their flight to the western coast of Florida. He is dressed in a light beige pair of dress pants, a short-sleeved yellow shirt and a light summer weight beige sport coat. Fidgeting nervously through the inner pockets of his sports coat, he stands in line. He is looking for the tickets for my grandmother and himself. This look of horror comes over his face as he says to my grandmother to whom he's been married for 48 years, "I can't find our tickets!" But before she has time to react, he pulls the tickets out of his jacket pocket and chuckles in a mischievous, boyish tone. My grandmother got it again! It wouldn't be a trip without him playing a practical joke on her.

It is now his turn to move up to the young ticket agent behind the USAir counter. A sense of seriousness comes over him, Knowingly he pays close attention and makes sure there will be a cart ready in Pittsburgh to transport him and my grandmother to the concourse where they will take the next plane on their journey. Quickly he turns around and signals to me that everything is in place and their trip is soon to begin. Slowly he begins to walk toward me and I notice he is having more difficulty breathing this morning than he usually does. It is probably due to the anxiety about their trip.

During the last few minutes before they are called to board the flight for Pittsburgh, he is nervously pacing

back and forth. Trying to cram everything into the last minute he gives me details about taking care of their older black haired dog Mindy. This is a ritual with him every time they go away. When their flight is announced over the intercom, he and my blonde haired grandmother hug and kiss me, telling me they will see me in a week, but with a suntan. Then he stands with a hardened protruding belly and waits anxiously for me to rub his large belly that has come from the medication he must take to keep him alive. I slowly rub his belly, our symbol of affection, and tell him to have a fun and safe trip.

Slowly he walks over to the metal detector and empties his deep pockets of loose change, car keys, and inhalers. He quickly proceeds through the metal detector and anxiously gathers his belongings. Going up the moving escalator to board their flight he and my grandmother turn and wave a final good-bye. As he is going past the window, he sucks in his cheeks as far as he can and crosses his eyes. This makes him look like Popeye. I laugh and wave a final good-bye. As I am walking past the waiting area, I can still smell the scent of my grandfather's favorite cologne. I laugh and think, this is my grandfather, the one I call Poppy.



PLENTY OF FUN

Eric Croston

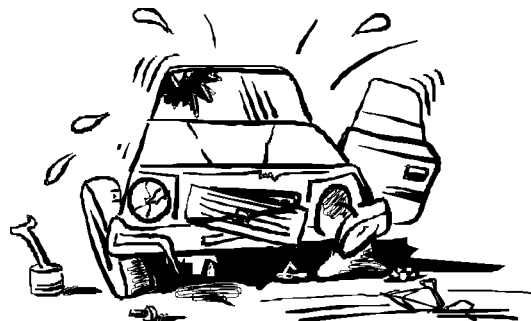
I WAS BROUGHT UP in what I would consider a normal middle class family, in Medford, Wisconsin. Drinking alcohol was accepted by the majority of the people. When I was seven years old I moved to Milford, Pennsylvania. My parents never really drank much, only socially when their friends came to visit. I cannot ever remember seeing my parents drunk.

The first person I remember seeing drunk is my older brother. He was fourteen or fifteen years old, and I was eleven or twelve years old. One day when I came home from school with my parents and he was cooking dinner in the kitchen, my parents noticed it right away, I guess, because they told me to go play outside. I had no idea what was happening. When I came back inside I heard my mom talking to one of her friends on the phone. She was telling her friend that my brother was drunk. After I heard this I went to his room to see if he looked drunk. I thought he would look like the drunken people that I had seen on television and in the movies. I thought he would be falling off his bed and acting obnoxious, but when I looked at him he didn't look like that. He was just sitting on his bed. He looked like he was angry or disappointed about something, but he did not look drunk. I guess I did not know what the signs of a drunken person were. My parents ended up dumping out all of their alcohol. I wasn't really sure what to think of him. He was my older brother and my idol, but I was always told that alcohol was a bad thing.

The first time that I was ever drunk was at a keg party thrown by my football team. The party was to celebrate the end of our doubles sessions. Doubles sessions, which are also called two-a-days, are a type of football practice. They are two practices a day, which are run before the

season starts. Two-a-days are to prepare the team for the upcoming season. They are the hardest practices of the season. The party was the Saturday night before I started my junior year of high school. I drank about twelve cups of beer in about two hours, and I felt very drunk. About twenty or twenty-five people were drinking, and we finished the keg in about two and a half hours. We were all drunk and running around trying to play football. We ended up throwing the football into a pond that we were playing next to. No one would retrieve it, so we decided to make some hotdogs over the campfire. It was now about a quarter to twelve, and I was supposed to meet my dad at a store called Grandpa Tony's, at twelve o'clock. I found someone sober enough to drive and talked him into driving me to Grandpa Tony's. I met my dad at twelve o'clock and he took me home.

I'm not sure if he knew I was drunk because he didn't say anything or ask me if I had been drinking. I know that my breath smelled like beer and I also spilled some beer on myself, so I know it wouldn't have been hard to notice that I had been drinking. He never said anything, and I just went to bed. After that there was only a handful of times that I drank enough to become drunk. I went to parties and would have a couple cans of beer or mixed drinks, but I always had plenty of fun without drinking.



POP IDOLS

Erik Brandt

THE BACKSTREET BOYS may be the biggest teen-sensation in the 1990s, like The Beatles were in the 1960s and 1970s. However, the Backstreet Boys could never be as influential and enduring as The Beatles.

The Backstreet Boys are an Orlando-based group under the management of Donna and Johnny Wright, like their predecessors, the New Kids on the Block. The group uses “dance-club pop, fresh-faced good looks, and sexy choreography to whip up their pre-teen fans into a hormonally charged frenzy” (“The Backstreet Boys”). These qualities do give the band a impressive image but do not necessarily show real musical talent. Tony Phillips, a VH1 correspondent, writes on their self-titled first album, “This album has more in common with a pack of baseball cards than the World Series; it’s over packaged, image-based fodder for kids that delivers a big stick of bubble gum stale enough to break a tooth.” He is saying that the album is “bubble-gum, teenaged girl” pop music at it’s worst. It seems like the band wants to show off their clothes and good looks rather than their musical skills, which they have little of anyway. Aidin Vaziri writes on their second release, *Millenium*, for CDNow.com, “Even when the Backstreet Boys themselves are allowed into the song writing process, they fail to offer anything more than superficial ear candy.” The band does not write their own material, Max Martin writes most of the songs; others have contributed to his work. What Vaziri is saying is that the band needs to invest a little more emotion to make their songs more meaningful. Undoubtedly, the Backstreet Boys have made history with their work. Their self-titled first album, *Backstreet Boys*, has sold more than ten million copies. The second, *Millenium*, has sold more than twelve

million copies and both are still selling. However, the band’s good looks are what sell their albums, not the band’s song writing skills.

On the other hand, the foursome from Liverpool, The Beatles, have endured throughout pop and rock’n’roll music. The Beatles’ origin traces back to the growing British skiffle craze in the late 1950s, and they were mainly inspired by Elvis Presley. The 1960s were influenced heavily by The Beatles’ spirit, which was “celebratory, omnivorous in their appetite for diverse influence, politically expansive, and spiritually open” (“Rolling Stone Album Guide”). The band is made up of John Lennon, a rebel genius, Paul McCartney, a perfectionist craftsman, George Harrison, a mystic, and Ringo Star, the clown. With these qualities they single-handedly reshaped rock’n’roll. David Binning remarks on the band’s sixth release, *Rubber Soul*, “The song writing is solid all the way through and the lyrics are getting better: Up until now, every damn song the Beatles ever wrote had been about love. ‘Nowhere Man’ broke them out of that.” Lennon and McCartney wrote the majority of the band’s songs. Binning is saying that, like the previous Beatles’ releases, this album has solid song writing from Lennon and McCartney. This album also shows an example of their musical experimentation, for example: The band’s first use of their sitar in the song “Norwegian Wood” and the Beatles’ first song not about love, “Nowhere Man.” Binning also reviewed the Beatles’ next release, *Abby Road*. He says, “This is a huge step forward, and one of their best albums- just half a year after *Rubber Soul* their lyrics had suddenly gotten about as good as they would ever be, and they came up with a solid album of great songs in whole new styles.” Once again the band shows musical

openness, this time going much deeper. Harrison provides an Indian-style song called, “Love You To.” The drummer, Ringo, shows his song writing skills with the well-known “Yellow Submarine.” Also songs like “She Said She Said” and “Taxman” show a harder rock sound in their music. With strong individual qualities, the Beatles placed emphasis on the group, and the members focused together and became the world’s most loved band.

An accurate comparison cannot be made because the Beatles have long since been broken up due to personal and artistic differences within the band, and the Backstreet Boys have most of their careers ahead of them. However, in a comparison of two albums from each band, The Beatles show greater musical talent. They improved with every album and always tried something new. The Backstreet Boys have focused more on their images with bulky CD inserts brimming with band photos. Also, the little song writing they offered did little to improve the quality of their songs. This is why The Beatles have been the most enduring, most covered, and best-loved band in all of music.

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Citing Sources

It is very common in college to incorporate other people’s ideas, words, and statistical information into our writing. Whenever we do so, and the ideas, words, and statistics are not common knowledge, we are required to cite our sources. Within the humanities, we usually use the Modern Language Association’s parenthetical documentation style within the text of our essays and then list the source material in alphabetical order on a separate “Works Cited” page at the end of our essays.

Failure to do these two things constitutes one form of plagiarism and is an illegal act. It is, in fact, theft, and punishable by law. Therefore, it is very important to learn to document sources accurately. In this case, accuracy also means to do so correctly. Failure to provide the proper information in the proper place and with the proper punctuation indicates to the reader that the writer is lazy or inept and thus NOT TRUSTWORTHY.

If, as a writer, you are to be taken seriously, you must develop trust with your reader, whether that reader is your instructor, your classmates or a future employer.

PUT YOUR FOOT IN IT

Heather Green



WHILE I WAS growing up in a small town in south Jersey, there were not many games to be played by the children. The one game that every child loved to play was soccer. When I first played soccer I was about seven. I played for a local team called the Woodstown Wild Things. We practiced three times a week, and the games were on Sundays. At practice, playing soccer was the only thing I wanted to do.

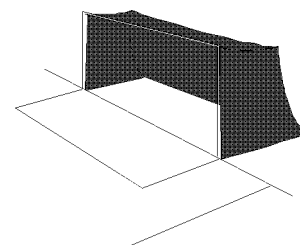
My position on the team was full back, and I had to make sure the ball got to the other side of the field. This way the opposing team could get the ball and score. The day of the last game of the season was on a sunny Sunday afternoon. We had to win the game in order to go to the playoffs. The teams enter the field. Our team was ready to play. The other team had the ball first. The girl kicked the ball right to me. When the ball came to me I knew just what to do with it. I trapped the ball, and with all my might I kicked it to the other side of the field. What I did not know was that my teammate was there in position to receive the ball and score the goal. We were all very happy. The game continued to be played for two, twenty-minute halves.

At half time, the game was still one to zero. It was time to begin playing the second half of the game. Both teams were ready to enter the field. The other team received the ball to start the half. This time the coach put me on the front line and said, "With a foot like that, you could score many goals for the team." There I was on the front line. The other team kicked the ball. I stopped it, but then I forgot what to do with it. I passed it to my teammate, and she passed it back to me.

Down the field we passed it back and forth. I could hear the coach screaming, "Kick the ball, Heather!" I did

just that. I was excited when the goalie missed the ball and I scored. After that the game was played the same way for the remainder of the time. We did not allow the other team to score any goals. We went on to win the game two to nothing.

Playing soccer has been the only sport I ever enjoyed playing. Aside from the drills and stretches, just playing was a great opportunity to be able to meet others who also love the sport. I wasn't prepared for all the drills and stretching that went along with playing soccer. When it came time to play the game, however, I was excited. It was even better when we were able to play in the playoffs, even though we lost one to zero, to the next best team in the league. It was a memorable experience. To be able to play soccer is what has kept me in shape and healthy. Even though we did not make it to the championship game, I still enjoyed soccer and had a great time playing the game.



LOSS

Jamie Kim

LOSING A FAMILY MEMBER can be the hardest experience to cope with. For many Koreans, the Chinese New Year is a day to spend quality time with family. Nine years ago, I had a chance to spend Chinese New Year in Korea. On February 8, 1990 I was in a small town outside of the capital city. It was the countryside, so it did smell a little like livestock and an outhouse. I was at my uncle's house eating breakfast and my mom told me to eat well because I was going to have an eventful day. I love Korean food, so I ate heartily.

Suddenly, eight of my father's friends dressed in black stampeded in, trying to hide their tears. My mom would not let me make eye contact with them and told me to hurry up. The men had faces of stone and walked into the back room where I wasn't allowed to go. My mom and sister suddenly ran into that room crying as the men were pushing a coffin back into the room. My mom told me my dad had passed away. Being eight years old, I didn't understand.

At the wake, everyone was crying; even my sister, who is a year older than me. When the men came and went out of the door with my dad in the coffin, I realized they were taking my dad away. My mom and sister were jumbled in the crowd of family that was going up to the mountains with the men holding my father on their shoulders.

I ran inside to get my jacket, and hurried out the door to catch up to my mom. It was below zero that winter morning, and I was freezing without my hat and mittens to keep me warm. I walked so fast up the mountain that I couldn't feel my toes, fingers or face. I finally reached the place where my mom and sister were. I looked down and saw a big empty hole that the men had dug to place my

dad's coffin in. That's when I realized my dad wasn't going to be on the plane ride back home to America in a few days. I also realized things were going to be different in a few weeks. Who would pick me up from school everyday since my mom works until seven? How would I get to church on Sundays without my dad driving? At age eight, one thing came clear to me—the abounding love in my family will pull the three of us through. After almost ten years since my father passing away, I realized life does go on.

Courage

Writing personal essays often requires courage. As college students you will be writing for a public audience, and it will be up to you to decide how much of yourself you reveal to that audience. Many of you will discover that one of the ways that college is substantially different from high school is that your peers in college will be far more accepting of you than your peers in high school were. Diversity is more likely to be celebrated in college than in high school where significant peer pressure is exerted for everyone to look and behave alike.

The word “university” implies *universal*. Your attitude needs to be open and accepting of others. Naturally, you can expect the same from your peers. Take advantage of this opportunity to expand your world and the advantages a larger world will afford you.

HUCKLEBERRIES AND CRANBERRIES NO MORE

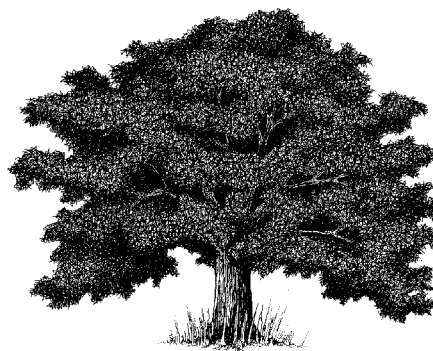
Jeff Bloss

THE ENVIRONMENT WE LIVE IN is becoming dirty and unhealthy. Over the past couple of decades as studies continue to show, due to a decline in the quality of the air we breathe and the water in our waterways, measures have been taken to reduce the amount of pollution. These include installing catalytic converters on cars and filters on vents of factories. Both are giant steps; however, more must be done in order to preserve our planet so our future generations can lead enjoyable lives. I have noticed some of the terrible effects of pollution through first-hand experience.

Over the past five years, my great-uncle and I have made our annual treks to his swamp during the months of July and August. We go there to search for bushes of plump and royal blue huckleberries. They have a sweet taste as if somebody went through and sprinkled them with sugar. This is why I usually walk out of the swamp with more huckleberries in me than there are in the bucket. When we arrived there this past summer we received an unpleasant surprise. With some of the worst drought conditions of the century, we found most of the berries to be small and dried up. They did not even have their usual flavor. My great-uncle said to me that he has seen many summers when there was little rainfall and he was still able to find copious amounts of big berries. After all, it takes a prolonged period of hot and dry weather to rob a swamp of its moisture. After looking around for some time and seeing the dismal sight, we noticed that the number of pine trees was also becoming sparse. The trees grow at the edge of the swamp, near the huckleberry bushes, and provide shade to keep the ground from drying out too quickly. It is said that these trees may be dying as a result of acid rain.

I have also noticed another change near the huckleberry swamp that may be a result of changes in the environment. Every September my great-uncle and I also visit the cranberry pond, located in the center of the swamp. It is an area of thick moss covering a circular body of water, about one hundred and twenty feet in diameter. After visiting this area for the past five years, we have noticed changes taking place. The major change is the decrease in the size of the moss-covered pond. Its size has been reduced by approximately twenty percent since the year we first went there. The creek, which distributes water from the pond to the outskirts of the swamp, is also becoming smaller every year. These two factors may be the result of different vegetation growing on the swamp and choking out the cranberry bushes, possibly forcing them toward extinction. Every year the amount of berries in our buckets becomes less. This year we barely found enough to make cranberry sauce for Thanksgiving.

Changes in the environment may be putting controls on our lives whether we realize it or not. I do not want these changes to destroy the area that is special to me.



VIOLENCE AND POP CULTURE

Jeremy Melber

AS COLLEGE STUDENTS, we don't have to worry much anymore about high school violence. We escaped the pressures that go along with high school, as well as the fear some are beginning to feel every day when they walk into the building. Violence in our schools has become a hot topic in today's modern world. Before 1996 it was practically unheard of, but since then, more than sixteen schools have seen violence walk through their doorways, leaving nearly forty people dead. The biggest question in all these occurrences is "What kind of person would do something like this?" A big opinion circulating is that it was brought on by the violence on television and music artists such as Marilyn Manson and the heavy metal band Metallica. Does that mean today's generation is experiencing different social patterns than before?

The late 1980's was a big time for hard rock and heavy metal bands, but school shootings were practically unheard of. Most of the suspects in today's school shootings appear to be fans of this type of music, but it might just be another stereotype. After all, these musicians never gave direct orders to these kids. What is behind this music that attracts kids with these mental disorders? It could be the lyrics about death and torture. It also could be the image these bands are producing. It was no wonder that Utah State Fairpark CEO, John Whitaker, cancelled a show featuring Marilyn Manson after he reviewed a poster and song lyrics outlining the concert that was sent to him by Mansons' management (www.mtv.com). Many of the youth that attend Mansons' shows are dressed in black and displaying black make-up on their faces. This is not a one-time occurrence, because many any of them dress like this all the time. This has caused some schools to set a dress code.

Meanwhile, Marilyn Manson defends himself when he is asked about these situations, and claims that his music is only to display free expression. What he doesn't realize is that these are the of expressions that his fans are exerting and are deadly to those around them. It is also possible that he just doesn't care.

It doesn't mean that all these students are capable of committing these acts; however, it seems to be the type of ones doing it. It is very rare that Britney Spears' fans open fire in a high school cafeteria killing the students inside. The United States Secret Service is conducting investigations on what type of people commit acts like these, and why they do it (www.abcnews.com).

Not all the blame falls on the music industry. They are sharing it with the violence on the big screen. The types of things we see in movies could only put thoughts into the already disturbed minds of these rebelling youths. Movies such as *Scream* and *I Know What You Did Last Summer*, which show teenagers being murdered, are being viewed by millions all over the country, especially by the teenagers who find joy in murder. This also puts blame on American society because we are the ones who promote these types of movies because we flock to the theaters to see them. It is like a force that brings us back for more. This type of film is not so heavily seen in other countries, and the rate of school shootings is not as high there either.

We can't change what is going on in the movie or music industry until we change our own lives. We don't have to go to the theater or turn on the radio to hear about violence. All we have to do is tune into the news or pick up a newspaper. What we see in them is reality. But more and more, the violence in the theaters and on the radio, is turning into that reality. We might be lucky enough not

to experience it first hand, but many do. A shooting victim at Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon once remarked, "I realized something terrible had happened when I noticed blood coming out of my side . . . then I realized it was my blood" (www.abcnews.com). These are things we would rather not hear, but it is something we have to deal with in order to end violence and make it safe to walk back into school.



A **sentence** is a group of words with a subject part and a verb part; neither of which is qualified with a subordinate conjunction (words like "because," "who," and "after").

The three most serious sentence writing errors are (1) *comma spliced* sentences, also known as comma faults; (2) ineffective sentence *fragments*; and (3) *fused sentences*, also known as run-on sentences.

Comma spliced sentences occur when two or more groups of words, containing subject and verb parts, which are not subordinated, are strung together with commas, as in the following example:

"Bob drives too fast, he has a lead foot, and he has received two speeding tickets in the past month."

Notice that there are three clearly independent clauses in the example. Sometimes students assume that this is an example of having three items in a series that require commas. However, independent clauses fall outside of this rule. The first comma should be a semi-colon, if the sentence is to be written in this fashion. Or perhaps the whole sentence should be revised.

Ineffective sentence fragments occur when a group of words is written as a sentence but they lack either a subject part or a verb part, or they are a dependent clause, as in each of the following:

"Walking across campus."

Or

"Which came about after I missed the free throw."

Fused sentences occur when a writer simply writes two sentences as if they were one:

"Mary told Bob to stay out of her life she was sick of his silly innuendos."

In this case, the writer probably meant to subordinate the second clause rather than to start a new sentence. We sometimes speak in a short hand method, and the "and that" words might have been left out. Student writers must be aware that spoken language and written language, especially college level writing, are not the same thing and have notably different requirements.

NO MORE DENTS

Jessica Petrilak

“**D**RIVE CAREFULLY!” my dad yells out the large white door as I leave the house. I slowly walk toward my car and a feeling of disgust comes over me as I glance at the fresh dents in the passenger side. My perfect little red car is not perfect anymore. I walk around the front of the car and take a look at the blackout covers that are on the headlights and think to myself, “Should I take them off?” I decide that it will be too much work and it is a short ride down Greenfield Road.

I get into the car, turn on my red light-up dice, turn up the CD player, and lock the door. I take the left turn and begin my ride home. I’m driving cautiously and watching for deer so I don’t get any more expensive costing dents in my car. I look to the right in an open field and see at least a half dozen deer standing there, their little eyes shining back at me. I start to slow down, becoming more and more alert to the animals grazing in the surrounding fields. I round the corner near the golf course and take a look at the time. It is now twelve o’clock on the nose. I flick on the blinker, turn onto Greenfield Road and have a vivid flashback of that stupid deer running head first into the side of my car. I keep saying to myself, “Drive slower.”

I travel for about two minutes and come to the end of the row of houses. The sharp corner is coming up, so I drop down to twenty miles per hour. I squint my eyes and see something in the middle of the road. “What the heck is that?” I mutter in a curious voice. I drive a little closer and lock up the brakes.

“IT’S A BEAR!!!” Wait it’s two bears! Okay, calm down, Jess. I keep saying this last sentence over and over again out loud.

I put the car in park and sit very still, thinking about what I should do. I think maybe I could beep the horn,

but then I realize that the dumb thing is broken. I then decide to just sit and wait patiently for them to pass.

The big one is the first to move. It stands on its hind legs and reaches more than six feet high. This massive creature has to weigh at least four hundred pounds. This is happening only inches away from my front bumper. It then drops back down onto all fours and walks toward the other side of the road. Quickly, the second and smaller bear scurries behind. Before passing completely, it turns and looks almost into my eyes, “Get out of our backyard.”

The two creep deep into the woods before I move the car. I take a moment to clear my head and to think to myself, “Wow, I just saw two bears, up close.”

I then start driving again and get on the cell phone to my dad, saying, “You’ll never believe what just happened. I almost hit two gigantic black bears.”

“Thank God you didn’t,” my dad says, “We don’t need any more dents in that car of yours.”

Coordinate Conjunctions

Coordinate conjunctions are words that join other words or groups of words in an equal fashion; that is, they do not subordinate words or groups of words. The most commonly used coordinate conjunctions are **and**, **but**, **so**, and **or**. When these words are used to join independent clauses, they require a **comma** before them: “Professor Tseo’s lecture on socio-economic conditions in western China was quite interesting today, **and** it was short.”

Note: Never begin sentences with coordinate conjunctions except in very rare cases. Beginning sentences with “**so**” sounds very immature.

HARD WORK DOES PAY OFF

John Colaneri

IN 1995 I STARTED my high school career at Don Bosco Prep, an all boys' school located in Ramsey, New Jersey. I was leaving my friends and knew no one, but I knew if I played well in football that I would have no problem making friends. What I did not realize was how much hard work and dedication would go into playing football.

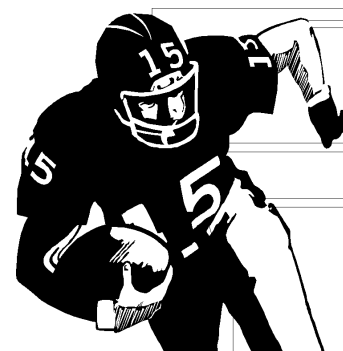
At four-foot-eleven and a mighty 110 pounds, there was not an ounce of muscle to be found on my body. The fact is that some girls could have probably kicked my butt. There was only one thing that separated me from other boys and that was my heart. Pound for pound I could not stand up to anyone, but no one had the kind of heart that I had. Since I was a little boy my dad would always say to me, "John, it does not matter how big or strong you are, but the size of our heart is what measures a man." I took that advice and applied it to everything that I did from that day forth.

Before the season started I would work and sweat until I was in the best shape I had ever been. I knew deep down I could have started even when I was a freshman. The coaches would always tell me that I was too small and I could not handle playing in a real game. I would do well in practice and work harder than anyone else on the field. One day my head coach, Coach Moore, came up to me and said, "John, you're doing a great job in practice, and we know that you have more heart and desire than anyone else on this field, but you're still just too small to play and we have to win this year." For as long as I live I will never forget what that man said to me. Now, when most people hear something like that they decide that there is no chance that they will ever play so they decide to quit. That was not my attitude at all. This put more desire and aspiration

into my life than ever before. I was ready to start my journey, and I would only be committed to excellence.

My senior year took a 360-degree turn on me. I had transferred schools and now attended my local high school, Ramapo. I had to prove myself all over again to new coaches and new teammates. Now I was ready. In the off-season I lifted weights non-stop and put on about 25 pounds. When practices started I was really nervous and felt like I was a freshman again and soon realized that I was one of the strongest kids on the team. After the first week of practice the coaches were so impressed with me that I instantly became a starter. Finally my dream had come true, and I was a starting outside linebacker. Our team was incredible; we were ranked number six in the country. Although the best was yet to come for me, everything that I had ever wanted was about to come true for me. After the season was over I had made the all-star football team and received an award for being chosen on this team. I was never so happy in my life.

All my hard work, dedication, and perseverance had finally paid off. I beat the odds and became the star even though no one thought I could do it. If I put my mind to something I can accomplish whatever I want. Oftentimes people quit because things are hard. What they have to realize is that this is what life is all about, disappointments and satisfactions.



Volume 5

COMPARISON OF McDONALD'S, BURGER KING'S, AND WENDY'S FRENCH FRIES

John Ha

FAST FOOD HAS BECOME an everyday meal for people all over the world. It definitely became a part of my diet when I came to college. There is a variety of sandwiches at every fast food restaurant and of course, French fries. French fries are a favorite choice for many people. I am going to compare the prices, nutritional facts, and tastes of McDonald's, Wendy's, and Burger King's fries. In a poll that I took of ten people, seven preferred McDonald's fries, three preferred Burger King's fries, and no one preferred Wendy's. In this essay, I will discuss which French fries are better in every way. All of the prices and nutritional facts come from the fast food restaurants in Hazleton, Pennsylvania.

When ordering fries, the first thing that comes to mind is size. McDonald's, Burger King, and Wendy's offer different sizes at different prices. For a small order, McDonald's fries will cost \$0.89, Burger King's fries cost \$0.95, and Wendy's fries cost \$0.89. If a small order of fries is all that's needed, the better deal is from McDonald's or Wendy's. However the best place to go for a medium sized order is Wendy's because they charge \$0.99, while Burger King's cost \$1.19, and McDonald's cost \$1.34. Again, Wendy's fries are the bargain for a large order. They cost \$1.39, while McDonald's cost \$1.49, and Burger King's cost \$1.59. For the really hungry person, Wendy's provides a "Biggie Sized" order for \$.39 more. At Burger King, fries can be "Big Size" for \$.39. McDonald's offer a "Super Size" order of fries for \$1.79. Again, these prices come from Hazleton fast food restaurants. These prices may vary at other locations.

When it comes to French fries, I don't think anyone knows the nutritional facts on them. I think it is very important to know, so I did some research on the

nutritional facts of each brand of French fries. I obtained all of these facts from the restaurants themselves. When asked for the nutritional information, they are glad to provide this information. At McDonald's, a small order of fries contains 10 grams of total fat, 0 mg of cholesterol, 210 calories, and 135 grams of sodium. In a medium order, there is 22 grams of total fat, 0 mg of cholesterol, 450 calories, and 290 mg of sodium. Large fries contain 26 grams of total fat, 0 mg of cholesterol, 540 calories, and 350 mg of sodium. At Burger King, a small order of fries has 13 grams of total fat, 0 mg of cholesterol, 250 calories, and 550 mg of sodium. A medium order contains 21 grams of total fat, 0 mg of cholesterol, 400 calories, and 820 mg of sodium. A large order has 30 grams of total fat, 0mg of cholesterol, 590 calories, and 1180 mg of sodium. At Wendy's, a small order of fries contains 13 grams of total fat, 0 mg of cholesterol, 270 calories, and 85 mg of sodium. A medium order has 23 grams of total fat, 0 m of cholesterol, 470 calories, and 150 mg of sodium. A large order has 27 grams of total fat, 0 mg of cholesterol, 570 calories, and 180 mg of sodium. After looking over the information, I personally feel that none of these fries are healthy. But considering the facts, McDonald's comes out on top. That confuses me because McDonald's fries are the greasiest and saltiest. So I would think it's the worst of the three. Based on the facts, however, McDonald's is healthier than the rest.

McDonald's, Wendy's, and Burger King all have excellent tasting French fries. I enjoy McDonald's more because they are greasier and saltier than those of their competition. Burger King's fries are crispier, not as greasy, but also salty like McDonald's. Wendy's fries are bigger than McDonald's and Burger King's.

I am not surprised with the overall outcome. The facts leaned towards McDonald's being the better deal overall. The fries at McDonald's also have a better nutritional value than the other two. McDonald's won the taste category because seven out of ten people I interviewed preferred them to Burger King and Wendy's. And I don't blame them. Everyone loves the hot, salty, greasy fries that come from McDonald's.



Textbooks

Learn how to read a textbook. This used to be one of the standards of a high school education and was sometimes taught as early as junior high. If you are not sure you are reading your textbooks in the most efficient manner possible, go to the Learning Center and ask for help.

One of the first things you should learn to do is to make adequate use of the index found at the back of most textbooks. This is imperative when using a handbook. If you have a paper marked with a comma splice, you need to look in the index of your handbook for the words "comma splice" and turn to the pages indicated there.

The index is also a good place to find source material for more information on a topic. Usually, somewhere near the index, you will find a limited bibliography or a list of further readings on topics covered within a textbook. If you need to write a research paper for a course, this is the first place you should look for additional authors and works that might be useful in your research.

Do not forget to look for a glossary at the back of your textbooks too. Specialized words are often defined there. College is a place where your vocabulary is expected to grow, substantially.

TOYS WERE NOT ENOUGH

Katarzyna Mlochowska

AS A CHILD I never appreciated toys. To me they were always artificial images of a grownup life. I used to feel cheated when my parents gave me a miniature car or a doll. Of course I played with them, but I always wanted them to be real. This attitude got me into trouble in my early days.

When I was about four years old my dream was to be a hair stylist. Knowing that, my father bought me a set of plastic scissors, rollers, combs, and hairdryers so I could “practice” my future occupation. Our neighbor’s daughter was a year younger than me, and we used to be playmates. One day, left alone in my room, we decided to explore the art of hairdressing. After about fifteen minutes I grew bored of pretending and said, “Hey, don’t you think it would be cool if I gave you a haircut with real scissors?” My little friend, not knowing any better, loved the idea and even helped me look for the scissors. We were having the time of our lives until her mom entered the room and screamed, “Oh my God!” My customer, who always combed her hair with bangs, did not have any of them left. She looked ridiculous! When she started to cry, I felt bad about what I had done and, on top of this, my mom spanked me.

Then, around the age of six, my seven-year-old cousin and I were building a car from sand in our back yard. Everything was great: we had a steering wheel, pedals, and we were screaming beeping sounds to imitate the horn. Out of nowhere my cousin struck upon the thought of playing with my parents’ car. My mission was to steal the keys, and he was supposed to be the driver. I thought, “Great, finally something real!” Avoiding my parents’ attention, we quietly sneaked into the car, and he started it. Unfortunately, he was too young to know that the car

had been left in first gear. Oops, we hit the fence. Discipline for this one was severe: I was not permitted to watch television for a week.

Approaching my eighth birthday, I made friends with one of the girls from school, and invited her to my house for a sleepover. We were make believe princesses, who drank wine from empty glasses. By now I should have learned that pretending was safe, but the temptation was too strong. I found the bottle of wine in the kitchen; and somehow I managed to open it to treat my girlfriend and me to a generous amount of dry burgundy. I did not like it, but she did. After tossing down two glasses of wine, my eight-year-old girlfriend became drunk and sick. She missed two days of classes. As a result, I was not allowed to leave the house to go anywhere except to school for the next two weeks and that hurt.

Today, when I reminisce about the past, I laugh, hoping that my children will be satisfied with the toys I buy for them.



A PART OF A TEAM

Kristin Berthelsen

A GREAT EMPHASIS was placed on sports in our town while I was in high school. Being on a sport's team meant to me that one was a good athlete, succeeded in school and was known to everyone. At least that is what I had thought while I was in junior high. I was clumsy and never thought of myself as much of an athlete, but I found myself in the element of high school that I was opposed to my freshman year.

Beth was my best friend, and we did everything together. My freshman year, Beth wanted to join the track and field team, and she wanted me to join it with her. She had been involved in sports before, which is something I had never done. I was nervous and opposed the idea. I was sure that I would not be any good and that I would be made fun of. I pleaded my side to Beth empathetically, but somehow she still convinced me to join. Inside I was excited to be a part of a team and to actually be involved in a sport. Yet on the outside I felt clumsy, frightened, and intimidated as a freshman.

Beth automatically found her niche in the sport of distance running, while I just wandered around trying to find some event that I would not embarrass myself too much at. I decided to try the long jump, although I kept thinking I am not going to be able to do this. With an audience of upper classmen around me, I tried out for the event. Initially making a fool out of myself, I landed directly on my butt. The coach helped me up and encouraged me to try it again.

After two weeks of being on the track team, I was still participating in the long jump and not improving. One day after practice my coach took me to the side and politely told me that I might want to try a different event. All of my inklings about team sports had become true. I was no

good at sports. I was on the verge of tears, yet he convinced me that I might be good at throwing. He said that my height would be an advantage to the throwing event. I slowly agreed to give it a shot

The next day my coach introduced me to the new event. Meeting my new coaches and having a new audience, I was sure that I would make a fool out of myself again. My new coach began me with the shot put. She showed me the stance and how to throw the shot put and allowed me try it. Sweaty palmed, I stepped up to try. I closed my eyes tight and threw the shot put. The throw seemed to go in slow motion. I slowly opened my eyes, and I turned, ready for the critical reviews. What I found though was an astonished crowd. I looked to my coach for disapproval, and she approached me saying, "I am glad you joined our team."

Over my years in high school I continued to improve my throwing status. By my senior year I was throwing 26' and ½". I was proud of myself. I had overcome one of my greatest fears, being on a team sport. I was wrong when I had first begun. I was not as clumsy as I had thought. Now when I hear myself saying that I cannot do something, I stop myself and say I can do it. I am proud that I tried a sport, and even more proud that I accomplished something I thought I never could do.



A STRANGE PLACE TO PLAY

Mark Yerke

AS I OPEN THE HEAVY, circular sewer cover flush with the earth, I immediately feel the bone chilling air rush through my entire body. I can safely say that a sewer tunnel does not seem like a popular place for kids to hang out. However, for my friends and me, it was a place of exploration, a place that was unusual, a place I thought was fun. I make my way out of the house and I hear my mom yell out to me, “Don’t forget to be home by 3:30 p.m. sharp, and don’t you go down in those sewers again!”

I stroll out of the house completely disregarding the second part of her command, and I make my way down to the baseball field to meet the boys. As soon as I arrive, I am sent down into the cold darkness. As we walk through with our bodies hunched in a 90-degree angle I hear our leader shout back, “Watch, the cave ceiling drops, rises, and drops again!”

I abide by his request and press on, carefully. I begin to take notice that we are traveling farther than we have gone before, but I don’t dare say a word, considering the rest of the guys are four years older than I am.

I hear another shout. Jeremy, our leader, yells, “We are in the tar tunnel. It’s a little tight!”

Just as I contemplate how far we are planning to go, Jeremy stops at a manhole twenty feet above our heads. Suddenly, in the middle of Jeremy’s conversation with someone topside, I hear the mystery person yell, “Tell Mark to get home. He’s late and his mom is looking for him!”

“I am a dead man,” is the only thought that runs through my mind. Turning to the boys, I begin to plead my case about why we have to go back.

Jeremy looks at me and says, “No way, man, we’re going farther.”

Realizing I am alone in my journey, I beg for a flashlight. Jeremy looks at me with his evil, beady, black eyes and stammers, “No way, man, we’re going farther.”

I bravely snatch the flashlight out of his hands, turn around, crouch down, and run as fast as my body will allow. No more than twenty feet down the tunnel the flashlight begins to flicker. Frantically, I screw and unscrew the bulb trying to fight the inevitable darkness. Giving up on the flashlight, I throw it down and restart my nightmarish journey back home.

As I make my way down the tar tunnel, running with my hands on the smooth cold walls for guidance, a million thoughts race through my mind. “How long have I been down here?” “What is my mom going to do to me?”

“What the hell else could be down here with me?” It seems the more thoughts that run through my mind, the more sinister the feelings become that enter my body.

SMASH! I wake up flat on my back in a puddle, dazed from the blow to the head. Quickly I get up, remembering my priorities.

I begin to run, this time a little slower, trying to understand what had happened. Just as I realized that I had run into the ceiling dip in the cave, SMASH!, I awake again on my back in a puddle.

Barely able to move, I crawl back to my feet and stumble toward the lighted exit. “That must have been the low ceiling exit of the cave,” I think to myself as I slowly and painfully make my way up the ladder to safety. As I wipe the strong current of blood that engulfs my entire face onto my sleeve, I let out a deep sigh of relief that I have made it out alive.

The reassuring feeling leaves quickly, though, as I turn to see my mother waiting for me in the car, not even fifty feet away. Suddenly I realize that the nightmare has not ended, it is really just beginning.

A DINER TO REMEMBER

Seth Hueter

BABY'S DINER FLASHES its patrons back into the 1950's. It is centrally located in downtown State College, in between College and Beaver Avenues, and is easily accessible to all students at University Park. Baby's atmosphere and service are enjoyable, the prices are extremely reasonable for college students, and the quality of the food is equally as good.

Baby's atmosphere makes you want to travel back in time, back to the days of greasers and gangs, Frank Sinatra and Frankie Valley. Anyone who appreciates the past will thoroughly enjoy the sights and sounds of this authentic restaurant. Individuals who are familiar with songs from this era can, and usually do, sing along with the juke box, while others, who are less adventurous, simply tap their feet to the beat. The juke box plays such enjoyable tunes as; "My Girl," "In the Jungle," "Great Balls of Fire," and "Jail House Rock."

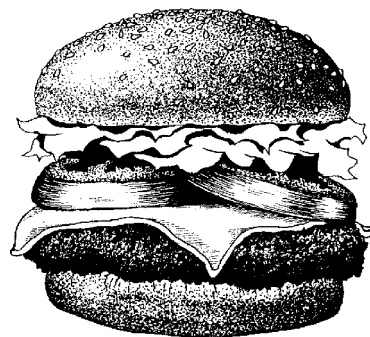
Along with the music, the servers are dressed in outfits from Fifties' restaurants. They wear white uniforms with white paper hats, and usually have grease stains on their aprons, just like in *Happy Days*, the TV show. Baby's Diner would not be complete without a genuine ice cream bar and soda fountain. The ice cream bar is where individuals can sit and enjoy ice cream sundaes and super thick malts while talking about the latest football game. Baby's atmosphere and service can be experienced and enjoyed by people of all ages.

Baby's prices are extremely low compared to the excellence of its service. A college student can order an entire meal for under ten dollars, and the food is exceptionally good. Baby's specialty is a "sack of weenie burgers," which are bite-size hamburgers that are relatively cheap but extremely good. Either "half a sack," which

includes six burgers, for \$3.50, can be ordered or a 'whole sack' of twelve weenie burgers for \$5.75. Either way, the weenie burger meal fills any college student's appetite. Another Baby's specialty is the giant basket of cheese fries for three dollars. These two items make a meal that is both appealing to the taste buds and the wallet.

Another great aspect of Baby's diner is the quality of the food provided, some of the best I have ever tasted. The meat is always done just right and has the right amount of flavor to tickle any diner's taste buds. From the weenie burgers, to cheese fries, cheese steak sandwiches and chicken, Baby's meals are always superbly produced. To top off Baby's wonderful meals, many delicious deserts are available to enjoy, such as milkshakes, ice cream sundaes and cakes. The quality of food at Baby's diner is acceptable to college student's stomachs and will fulfill any craving that they may have.

In conclusion, Baby's Diner has an atmosphere and service that will entertain, prices that will satisfy the wallet, and quality of food that will satisfy the appetite. I definitely recommend this restaurant to any college student who is under the constraints of a budget, but who is looking for a good time and an excellent meal.



LEARNING TO SERVE

Steve Trout

MANY PEOPLE LOVE to play the game of volleyball. Although some people play just for fun while others play in highly competitive leagues and tournaments, there is a similar problem among players of any level: properly setting the volleyball. What is the best thing a player can do to learn how to set it? The answer is repetition. Practice makes perfect in any type of learning situation, especially when it comes to athletics. There are many key factors when it comes to setting a volleyball. You need proper hand position, hand action, arm action, body position, and movement towards the ball. All of these positions and actions must flow together in order to give a proper and accurate set.

First we will start with the hand position. Put your hands above your head and put your index fingers and thumbs together. Now you should be looking through a “window” that these fingers make. Position your hands so that if a ball were small enough to go through your “window,” it would go right through the center of it and hit you between the eyes. Now pull your fingers apart little by little. You will feel as though a ball could fit in between your hands perfectly as they become a certain distance apart. The distance will be the position you will start your hands in before you contact the ball. If you are having trouble finding this position, grab a ball and decide that way.

Next is the hand action. The ball should contact only your fingers and never the palm of your hand. The points of contact on your fingers when setting the ball should be similar to the contact points when you had your hands together earlier. The ball should touch your thumbs and first two fingers with an equal amount of force, while your last two fingers on both hands may contact the ball

sometimes (for extra control), but with less force. Therefore, do not pull your last two fingers out of the way—keep them there for those sets that will require more control on the release.

The real “action” takes place in your wrists. The more flexible your wrists are, plus the stronger and faster your forearm muscles are, the better the setter you will be. Your elbows should be slightly bent at the time of contact with the ball (about the angle your arms bend to type) and your hands should be in the ready position, which was discussed earlier, as the ball contacts your fingers. Lie on your back, holding the ball in your hands, which are in the ready position, and move only your wrists to throw the ball a few inches into the air—of course, you’ll have to adjust the angle of your arms so that the ball won’t shoot behind you, but will go straight up in the air and land back in your hands.

Throw the ball with your wrists only, catching it with your hands and pausing to make sure that the ball lands softly and your hands are in the correct position at the time of contact. In order to allow the ball to land softly, you must time the contact in such a way as to retract your wrists at the same speed as the ball is coming—almost like a trampoline will softly catch you as you land.

After you are skilled at the down portion of this “trampoline” movement, you can stop pausing for quite as long before you throw the ball back into the air. Work at this using only the wrist movements (don’t use your arms yet). Keep performing this drill until there is no slapping sound when the ball hits your hands. After you have the timing down for this wrist movement, you can move on to the arm action.

Arm action is very important as well. While still laying

on your back—don't worry, you'll eventually stand up—start the movements described earlier. Throw the ball with only your wrists and “trampoline” the ball back into the air softly. The arm action starts as the wrists move to throw the ball back into the air—not before this movement. Do not make the mistake of cushioning the ball with your wrists and arms—this will constitute a “throw” in the volleyball world. Extend your arms simultaneously as you push with your wrists to release the ball. As you do this, the ball will go much higher requiring you to become even better at cushioning the ball as it lands in your hands, which, of course, are in ready position. As your timing gets better, the action of your hands, wrists, and arms become smoother and more controlled. I still practice this drill to warm-up before a game and to improve my touch on the ball. Now it's time to get on your feet and use your skills.

Body and foot position are very important in a good set. Always try and set with your right foot slightly in front of your left, always facing the left side of the court. At the time of your release, if possible, have your shoulders square to your target. At times you will be running around sprinting for balls, but if you try and set up (even if it's at the last second), your sets begin to be more consistent, and your team will be more successful. As you release the ball, you should be shifting your weight from your left to right foot. Do not set with your weight on the back foot. You will have less control and will tend to “underset” the ball.

If you learn all of these steps and practice at least one hour a day, I guarantee that in three months you will be a good setter. Should you keep practicing and playing after that, there is no limit to how good of a setter you can become.

The Personal Essay

Normally, when we think of college writing, we do not include the personal essay. However, it has been traditional for freshman to write personal essays for many years. The argument in favor of the personal essay is that freshman have a ready store of information, content, to draw from when assigned personal essay writing, and as members of a class, each student will be on an equal footing when it comes to writing this kind of essay.

In addition, the personal essay easily lends itself to a discussion of rhetorical modes. Students can quickly call upon content from their personal lives to create comparison and contrast essays or use information from their lives to illustrate points they might wish to make in a personal essay.

It is also quite common for students to be assigned readings in freshman composition courses. Usually writing assignments will ask students to respond to such readings, either by discussing the readings directly within an essay or by using the readings as sources to develop discussions, which will later be turned into essays. Obviously, it is important to read the assignments given in this case and to do so in a timely fashion.

A Miscellany

Handbooks: Your course will have a “required” handbook, but your instructor may not assign any required readings from it; what does “required” mean in this case?

As a new student, you probably went to the bookstore and purchased your texts for your courses before the first day of classes. As you walked down the aisles, you looked for the placards identifying the courses and section numbers for the piles of books you were about to purchase. You noticed that some books were identified as “required” by a particular instructor. And you bought those books.

What does “required” mean in this case? It means that the bookstore *understands* that the professor requires them for the course, but it does NOT mean that you are required to purchase them. This often comes as a shock to students. What the professor requires is that the student be knowledgeable about the information contained within the text.

A handbook in a composition course is a reference tool. The students taking the course are required to be able to access the information within the handbook in a timely fashion in order to avoid writing errors. For instance, a student who receives a notation on an essay indicating that the writing contained one or more *comma splices* (CS or CF) should look in the handbook’s index and find where such matters are discussed, read that portion of the text, and come to a satisfactory understanding of the problem so that it is not repeated.

Reading: Often writing instructors require students to read professionally written essays as part of a writing course. In college we “read to learn.” It is presumed that students, by the time they graduate from high school, understand this. However, freshmen do not always immediately understand the full concept of “reading to learn” within the discipline of a writing course. Usually they immediately understand that the reading they do may have something to do with matters of content, providing them with subject matter for their essays, but it is at least equally important to read in order to understand how to convey information.

Writers need to read in order to learn how to write. As writers we need to examine how other writers, successful writers, achieve their success. Even when we do not particularly like what we are reading about, or agree with a writer’s argument, we need to look closely at how she or he is conveying the message. We need to dissect essays, paragraphs, and sentences so that we can understand clearly how meaning is created in writing.

College Writing: What is college writing? Two interpretations of this phrase exist: 1) college writing is writing in response to material that others have written, and 2) college writing is written work which explores mature ideas through the unique perspective of the writer. In both cases, college writing is both specific and devoid of clichés. The college writer never simply repeats what others have to say and always finds

her or his own way of saying whatever it is she or he has to say. This, of course, is part of what makes college level writing difficult.

The other major area of difficulty lies within the college writer's mandate to always seek the truth, even when that truth is embarrassing or forces the writer to accept ideas that are contrary to the comfortable notions that she or he has grown up with.

Colloquial Language: College writers must learn to control the level of language they use for various writing situations. They must choose language appropriate for their audience and subject matter. Colloquial language—language that is very casual—is acceptable for conversation, personal letter writing, and even popular publications, but it is generally unacceptable for most college writing situations. Serious subject matter, delivered to an audience of professionals, whom one may not know, requires a respectful level of formality.

One of the more obvious uses of colloquial language is that of profanity. Just what constitutes profane language may vary during historical periods as it certainly does from one ethnic group to another; nevertheless, we can assume that language, commonly referred to as curse words, can be considered colloquial and inappropriate for most college level writing. Scatological terms, used mostly to punctuate spoken language in casual situations, words used to refer to bodily functions in a derisive manner, are also considered colloquialisms. In both cases the diction indicates a lack of awareness on the part of the writer, of the seriousness and the intellectual quality of the writing situation. Generally, students are aware that such terms

are inappropriate, and they usually succeed in avoiding them; however, a number of other terms have come into common use in the vernacular and students should take note of them and attempt to avoid them. In addition to developing the proper tone for the writing situations they find themselves in at college, they will also develop a broader, more versatile vocabulary, one of the most important and telling characteristics of an educated person.

Some Common Colloquialisms

The verb “to get” (get, got, gotten, getting), as in “I will get a car when I graduate.”

Corrected: “I will buy a car when I graduate.”

Colloquialism: “I am getting an education at Penn State.”

Corrected: “I am continuing my education at Penn State.”

Colloquialism: “I got the other students to agree to try my idea.”

Corrected: “I convinced the other students to agree to try my idea.”

NOTE: “To get” is not always colloquial, but more often than not it is wordy. Try to find a more direct, as well as accurate, way to state what you have to say.

The verb “to figure”

Colloquialism: “I figured I would go outside and shoot some baskets.”

Corrected: “I thought I would go outside and shoot some baskets.”

Colloquialism: “He figured out the math problem.”

Corrected: “He came to understand the math problem.”

Colloquialism: “She figured things could only get harder.”

Corrected: “She decided her problems would only become more difficult.”

The noun “lot” used as an adverb or adjective

Colloquialism: “A lot of the time I like to watch baseball on television.”

Corrected: “Frequently I like to watch baseball on television.”

Colloquialism: I like a lot of chocolate syrup on my ice cream.”

Corrected: “I like enough chocolate syrup to completely cover my ice cream.”

NOTE: The word “lot” is often misspelled, which only serves to compound the problem:

Common misspellings: *a lot* and *allot*.

The noun “kids”

Colloquialism: “I went outside with the other kids.”

Corrected: “I went outside with the other children.”

NOTE: The word “kid” denotes an immature goat. When people began referring to children as “kids” they did so in a derogatory manner, indicating that the children referred to behaved like young goats.

The noun “cop” or “cops”

Colloquialism: “The cop gave me a ticket for speeding.”

Corrected: “The officer cited me for speeding.”

NOTE: While the word “cop” has become part of acceptable casual usage and is no longer considered a derisive term when used to denote a police officer, it is still a very casual way of doing so.

Contractions

Colloquialism: “I can’t complete the work.”

Corrected: “I cannot complete the work.”

Colloquialism: “It’s time to begin work.”

Corrected: “It is time to begin work.”

NOTE: Contractions are used to indicate how we speak; written language only indulges in their use when the writer is attempting to indicate how something should sound when read out loud. In most college writing situations, this is not applicable.

Illogically shifting point of view to the second person

Colloquialism: “I walked into the crowded room where you could see people were not having a good time.”

Corrected: I walked into the crowded room where I could see people were not having a good time.”

NOTE: Using direct address when not giving instructions is also a sign of colloquial usage.

The adverbial sentence modifier “Hopefully”

Colloquialism: “Hopefully, I will pass today’s quiz.”

Corrected: “I hope to pass today’s quiz.”

Words to Watch For

College writing requires specificity. Make sure you edit your writing for common vague word choice:

relate to
deals with
great
there for me.

These words are often used in conversation but add little meaning to our written language.

Know the proper way to conjugate the commonly misused verbs “to lie” and “to lay.”

“To lie” is an intransitive verb: “I lie down each night to sleep.” Or: “I lay down last night on the couch.” Or: “I have lain here on the couch all day.”

“To lay” is a transitive verb: “I lay the pencil on the desk” Or: “I laid the pencil on the desk yesterday.”

Notice that the past tense of “to lie” is the same word as the present tense of “to lay.” Much of the confusion about the proper word to use lies in this fact. In addition, we are often leery of using the verb “to lie” because it also means to tell a falsehood. Context, of course, defines the difference between these two meanings.

Know the difference between “who” and “whom.”

Both of these words are a special kind of

pronoun within the category of “relative pronouns.” In addition to referring to an antecedent, they link other words to the noun or pronoun to which they refer. “Who” is the nominative case, and “whom” is the objective case for the pronoun. The easiest way to tell the difference, and perhaps the quickest, is to simply substitute the pronoun “he (or she)” and “him (or her)” in the sentence and listen to the difference. Usually, you can tell immediately which is correct.

“Mr. Wilson is the kind of teacher *who* likes to involve the students in a discussion in class.”

“Mr. Wilson for *whom* discussion is an integral part of any classroom lecture called on each student to answer the question.”

A common error is to substitute the word “that” for *who* or *whom* in a sentence. Much casual writing does this, simulating the way we talk casually. Keep in mind that when referring to people we should use the pronouns *who* or *whom* and not *that*.



The Movement Towards a More Casual Writing Style

Popular culture and its handmaiden, the “media,” and now the Web, which we might call a part of the new media, have encouraged a more casual style of communication. We might note the vernacular-*ization* of public language by simply comparing the speeches of our presidents from FDR to the present. It would be hard to imagine Reagan, Bush, or Clinton saying publicly, as FDR did, “We have nothing to fear but fear itself,” or as John Kennedy did, “Ask not what you can do for your country....” During the last eight years, it has become uncommon for news people to even refer to our President as “President Clinton”; instead they simply say, “Bill Clinton,” as if he were a neighbor.

The casualness of public speech can be seen even more radically on the Web, especially with the proliferation of chat rooms, where one must type very quickly, in a kind of shorthand if one is to participate. The same casualness of style is often used in email communication, although, properly speaking, email is actually a much more formal kind of communication and in the work place can constitute a contractual message between the writer and the recipient.

It is important to be aware of what message we are sending, not only in terms of content, but also in terms the more subtle messages of who we are, what we know, what it is we think of the content we are conveying, what we want our readers to think of that content, and how we want our readers to perceive us. Specificity

and seriousness of tone are the hallmarks of college writing. If we do not take the time and give the care to how we say whatever it is we have to say, then our readers will either not pay any attention to us or give us little credit for having anything of value to add to the overall conversation that exists between intelligent, educated persons.



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