

AP Language and Literature Reader
2013-2014

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Introduction to RHETORIC

In this course you will enhance your ability to think logically and write persuasively by learning the foundations of rhetoric and the skills of writing argumentation. Students should first understand the reading-writing connection; that is, you must think of all texts they read as the writing of an author. You should not see a novel simply as a book to read but as a finished and polished piece of writing. You should speculate, for example, on the reasons William Faulkner chose to write “A Rose for Emily” with suspended detail and non-chronological ordering of events or why Abraham Lincoln wrote “Four score and seven years ago” rather than simply “eight-seven years ago.” You should examine their reading texts carefully to determine the intent of the writers. Our ongoing focus in the study of rhetoric will be on how a writer uses language—diction, detail, image, tone, syntax, logical ordering, juxtaposition, or contrast, for example—to achieve a specific purpose.

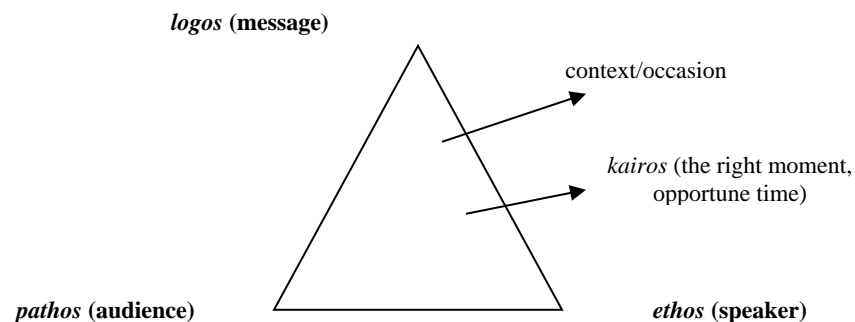
Rhetoric refers to the art of using words to persuade in writing or speaking. All types of writing—fiction, nonfiction, drama, and poetry—seek to persuade, and rhetoricians study these genres for their persuasive qualities. In our classroom you will study *logic*, the methods of ascertaining and preserving truth. You will learn how to explore causal relationships, proving conclusions with sound logic and clear reasoning. You will learn to deliberate issues carefully and to avoid hasty writing on a visceral level. You need to be able to analyze an assertion, determine its validity, prepare an appropriate response, and communicate that spoken or written response with clarity.

RHETORICAL THEORY

Argument: *Argument* is used here as a term to designate the entire persuasive essay. Writing argumentative essays is a complex process that addresses a targeted audience with a specific purpose and requires reasoning, a kind of controlled thinking in which the student comes to accept or reject an idea based on its validity and truth. An error in reasoning, or a *logical fallacy*, will weaken an argument and diminish the credibility of the writer. Effective arguments involve key issues, anticipated objections, gathered support, and logical reasoning to sway the thinking or behavior of the audience. An effective argument is a well-contrived presentation of ideas that takes a stand about an issue—often called the *thesis statement* or *claim*—and supports that thesis statement with various evidence or *premises*.

In writing arguments, you will learn to consciously structure your writing, using logical lines of reasoning such as order of importance, chain of reasoning, cause and effect, rebuttal, concession/refutation, and process analysis. Writers of arguments will also use the various modes of discourse to support their claims with a combination of both logical (*logos*) and emotional (*pathos*) evidence to establish their credibility as writers or their ethical appeal (*ethos*). The argument’s *inference* is the relationship between the premises and a *conclusion*, the final statement, which writers seek to prove as true and valid based on their premises, which also are assumed to be true.

Aristotle’s Rhetorical Triangle



Purpose: *Purpose* is the specific reason or reasons for the writing. It conveys what the readers have to gain by reading the essay. Purpose is the objective or the goal that the writer wishes to establish.

The writer's purpose might be to...

- Support a cause
- Promote a change
- Refute a theory
- Stimulate interest
- Win agreement
- Arouse sympathy
- Provoke anger

Audience: The *audience* is the writer's targeted reader or readers. The relationship between the writer and the audience is critical. You should consider the kind of information, language, and overall approach that will appeal to a specific audience. Here are some questions you can ask yourself during the prewriting stage of your argumentative essays.

- Who exactly is the audience?
- What do they know?
- What do they believe?
- What do they expect?
- How will my audience disagree with me?
- What will they want me to address or answer?
- How can I—or should I—use jargon?
- Should I use language that is formal, factual, and objective, or familiar, anecdotal, and personal?

Rhetorical Strategies: Appeals of Logic, Emotion, and Ethics

Types of Logical Appeals (*logos*):

Incorporate inductive reasoning
 Use of deductive reasoning
 Create a syllogism
 Cite traditional culture
 Cite commonly held beliefs
 Allude to history, the Bible, great literature, or mythology
 Manipulate the style
 Employ various *modes of discourse* for specific effects
 Provide testimony
 Draw analogies/create metaphors

Order chronologically
 Provide evidence
 Classify evidence
 Use testimony
 Cite authorities
 Quote research
 Use facts
 Theorize about cause and effect
 Argue from precedent

Types of Emotional Appeals (*pathos*):

Develop non-logical appeals
 Use language that involves the senses
 Include a bias or prejudice
 Include connotative language

Explore the euphemism
 Use figurative language
 Develop tone
 Experiment with informal language

Ethical Appeal (*ethos*)

Show written voice in the argument
 Make audience believe writer is trustworthy
 Demonstrate that writer put in research time
 Support reasons with appropriate, logical evidence
 Present a carefully crafted and edited argument

Demonstrate that writer knows and respects the audience
 Show concern about communicating with the audience
 Convince the audience that the writer is reliable and knowledgeable

Logical Fallacies

Logical fallacies are errors in reasoning that render an argument invalid.

General guidelines for student writers:

1. *Do not claim too much!* No writing will completely solve or even fully address all problems involved in a complex topic.
2. *Do not oversimplify complex issues.* You selected your topic because it is controversial and multifaceted. If you reduce the argument to simplistic terms and come up with an easy solution, you will lose your credibility and diminish your ethos.
3. *Support your argument with concrete evidence and specific proposals,* not with abstract generalizations and familiar sentiments. Always assume that your audience is skeptical, expecting you to demonstrate your case reasonably, without bias or shallow development.

Ten Common Logical Fallacies (there are many more!)

1. **ad hominem fallacy**—"To the individual," a person's character is attacked, instead of the argument.
Example: Nick Jacobson is not a worthy candidate for vice-president of the senior class because he is short and frowns too much.
2. **ad populum fallacy**—"To the crowd," a misconception that a widespread occurrence of something is assumed to make an idea true or right. *Example:* The parents of Brittany's friends allow their daughters to stay out until 2:00 a.m. on a school night, so Brittany's parents should allow her to stay out until 2:00 as well.
3. **begging the question**—Taking for granted something that really needs proving. *Example:* "Free all political prisoners" begs the question of whether some of those concerned have committed an actual crime like blowing up the chemistry building in a political protest." *
4. **circular reasoning**—Trying to prove one idea with another idea that is too similar to the first idea; such logical ways move backwards in its attempt to move forward. *Example:* The nuns are not influential because they rarely try to influence (Rep. Bart Stupak to MSNBC's Chris Matthews).
5. **either/or reasoning**—The tendency to see an issue as having only two sides *Example:* The possession of firearms should be completely banned or completely legal.
6. **hasty generalization**—Drawing a general and premature conclusion on the basis of only one or two cases. *Example:* The Dallas Police Chief suggested that all dogs be muzzled because two golden retrievers have been disturbing the peace in Fritz Park.
7. **non sequitur**—"It does not follow," an inference or conclusion that does not follow from established premises or evidence. *Example:* "He is certainly sincere; he must be right." OR "He's the most popular: He should be president."
8. **pedantry**—A display of narrow-minded and trivial scholarship; an arbitrary adherence to rules and forms. *Example:* Mary prides herself in knowing so much about grammar, but she never earns high grades on essays because she cannot think of insightful ideas or organize her essays.
9. **post hoc, ergo propter hoc**—"After this, therefore because of this," assuming that an incident that precedes another is the cause of the second incident. *Example:* Han-Hui worked on his written argument longer than he had for any other essay; therefore, he felt he must earn an "A."
10. **propaganda**—Writing or images that seek to persuade through emotional appeal rather than through logical proof; written or visual texts that describe or depict using highly connotative words or images—favorable or unfavorable—without justification. *Example:* Chris's infatuation with the model's ruby red lips, beautiful teeth, sparkling eyes, and streaming hair made him believe that Crest White is the best toothpaste.
11. **false analogy**—A fallacy in which an argument is based on misleading, superficial, or implausible comparisons. "If ObamaCare passes, that free insurance card that's in people's pockets is gonna be as worthless as a

Confederate dollar after the War Between The States—the Great War of Yankee Aggression.” (Paul Broun (R-GA))

*Baker, Sheridan. *The Practical Stylist With Readings*. 8th Edition. New York: Longman, 1998.

Modes of Discourse**

Description -- The traditional classification of discourse that depicts images verbally in space and time and arranges those images in a logical pattern, such as spatial or by association.

Narration-- The classification of discourse that tells a story or relates an event. It organizes the events or actions in time or relates them in space. Relying heavily on verbs, prepositions, and adverbs, narration generally tells what happened, when it happened, and where it happened.

Exposition-- One of the traditional classifications of discourse that has as a function to inform or to instruct or to present ideas and general truths objectively. Exposition can use all of the following organizational patterns.

- **Comparison:** This traditional rhetorical strategy is based on the assumption that a subject may be shown more clearly by pointing out ways it is similar to something else. The two subjects may each be explained separately and then their similarities pointed out.
- **Contrast:** This traditional rhetorical strategy is based on the assumption that a subject may be shown more clearly by pointing out ways in which it is unlike another subject.
- **Cause and effect:** One of the traditional rhetorical strategies, cause and effect consists in arguing from the presence or absence of the cause to the existence or nonexistence of the effect or result; or, conversely, in arguing from an effect to its probable causes.
- **Classification:** One of the traditional ways of thinking about a subject; classification identifies the subject as a part of a larger group with shared features.
- **Division:** Division is a traditional way of thinking about a subject that includes breaking the subject into smaller segments.
- **Definition:** Definition is a traditional pattern of thought which places a subject into an appropriate group and then differentiates the subject from the other sections of the group. The first step limits the meaning of the subject; the second step specifies its meaning. In prose, definitions are often extended by illustrations and examples.
- **Argumentation:** Also *persuasion*. This traditional form of discourse functions by convincing or persuading an audience or by proving or refuting a point of view or an issue. Argumentation uses *induction*, moving from observations about particular things to generalization, or *deduction*, moving from generalizations to valid references about particulars, or some combination of the two as its pattern of development.

**Woodson, Linda. *A Handbook of Modern Rhetorical Terms*. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English. 1979.

Toulmin Structure of Argument

Claim

A claim is a statement that you are asking the other person to accept. This includes information you are asking them to accept as true or actions you want them to accept and enact.

Many people start with a claim, but then find that it is challenged. If you just ask me to do something, I will not simply agree with what you want. I will ask why I should agree with you. I will ask you to prove your claim. This is where grounds become important.

Grounds

The grounds (or *data*) is the basis of real persuasion and is made up of data and hard facts, plus the reasoning behind the claim. It is the 'truth' on which the claim is based. Grounds may also include proof of expertise and the basic premises on which the rest of the argument is built. The actual truth of the data may be less than 100%, as all data is based on perception and hence has some element of assumption about it.

It is critical to the argument that the grounds are not challenged, because if they are, they may become a claim, which you will need to prove with even deeper information and further argument.

Data is usually a very powerful element of persuasion, although it does affect people differently. Those who are dogmatic, logical or rational will more likely to be persuaded by data. Those who argue emotionally and who are highly invested in their own position will challenge it or otherwise try to ignore it. It is often a useful test to give something factual to the other person that disproves their argument, and watch how they handle it. Some will accept it without question. Some will dismiss it out of hand. Others will dig deeper, requiring more explanation. This is where the warrant comes into its own.

Warrant

A warrant links data and other grounds to a claim, legitimizing the claim by showing the grounds to be relevant. The warrant may be explicit or unspoken and implicit. It answers the question 'Why does that data mean your claim is true?'

The warrant may be simple and it may also be a longer argument with additional sub-elements, including those described below. Warrants may be based on [logos](#), [ethos](#) or [pathos](#), or [values](#) that are assumed to be shared with the listener.

In many arguments, warrants are often implicit and hence unstated. This gives space for the other person to question and expose the warrant, perhaps to show it is weak or unfounded.

There are 6 main argumentative strategies via which the relationship between evidence and claim are often established. They have the acronym "GASCAP."

- Generalization
- Analogy
- Sign
- Causality
- Authority
- Principle

These strategies are used at various different levels of generality within an argument, and rarely come in neat packages - typically they are interconnected and work in combination.

Backing

The backing (or *support*) to an argument gives additional support to the warrant by answering different questions. Sometimes the warrant is not broadly understood or broadly accepted. In that case, a speaker or writer may have to defend the warrant by backing it up with reasons.

Qualifier

The qualifier (or *modal qualifier*) indicates the strength of the leap from the data to the warrant and may limit how universally the claim applies. They include words such as 'most', 'usually', 'always', 'sometimes'. Arguments may thus range from strong assertions to generally quite floppy or largely and often rather uncertain kinds of statement.

Qualifiers and reservations are much used by advertisers who are constrained not to lie. Thus they slip 'usually', 'virtually', 'unless' and so on into their claims.

Rebuttal

Despite the careful construction of the argument, there may still be counter-arguments that can be used. These may be rebutted either through a continued dialogue, or by pre-empting the counter-argument by giving the rebuttal during the initial presentation of the argument.

Any rebuttal is an argument in itself, and thus may include a claim, warrant, backing and so on. It also, of course can have a rebuttal. Thus if you are presenting an argument, you can seek both possible rebuttals and also rebuttals to the rebuttals.

Interrogating Texts: 6 Reading Habits to Develop in Your First Year at Harvard^s

Critical reading—active engagement and interaction with texts—is essential to your academic success at Harvard, and to your intellectual growth. Research has shown that students who read deliberately retain more information and retain it longer. Your college reading assignments will probably be more substantial and more sophisticated than those you are used to from high school. The amount of reading will almost certainly be greater. College students rarely have the luxury of successive re-readings of material, either, given the pace of life in and out of the classroom.

While the strategies below are (for the sake of clarity) listed sequentially, you can probably do most of them simultaneously. They may feel awkward at first, and you may have to deploy them very consciously, especially if you are not used to doing anything more than moving your eyes across the page. But they will quickly become habits, and you will notice the difference—in what you “see” in a reading, and in the confidence with which you approach your texts.

1. Previewing: Look “around” the text before you start reading.

You’ve probably engaged in one version of previewing in the past, when you’ve tried to determine how long an assigned reading is (and how much time and energy, as a result, it will demand from you). But you can learn a great deal more about the organization and purpose of a text but taking note of features other than its length. Previewing enables you to develop a set of expectations about the scope and aim of the text. These very preliminary impressions offer you a way to focus your reading. For instance:

- What does the presence of headnotes, an abstract, or other prefatory material tell you?
- Is the author known to you, and if so, how does his (or her) reputation or credentials influence your perception of what you are about to read? If unknown, has an editor helped to situate the writer (by supplying brief biographical information, an assessment of the author’s work, concerns, and importance)?
- How does the disposition or layout of a text prepare you for reading? Is the material broken into parts--subtopics, sections, or the like? Are there long and unbroken blocks of text or smaller paragraphs or “chunks” and what does this suggest? How might the layout guide your reading?
- Does the text seem to be arranged according to certain conventions of discourse? Newspaper articles, for instance, have characteristics that you will recognize; textbooks and scholarly essays are organized quite differently from them, and from one another. Texts demand different things of you as you read, so whenever you can, register the type of information you’re presented with.

2. Annotating: “Dialogue” with yourself, the author, and the issues and ideas at stake.

From start to finish, make your reading of any text thinking-intensive.

- First of all: throw away the highlighter in favor of a pen or pencil. Highlighting can actually distract from the business of learning and dilute your comprehension. It only seems like an active reading strategy; in actual fact, it can lull you into a dangerous passivity.
- Mark up the margins of your text with WORDS: ideas that occur to you, notes about things that seem important to you, reminders of how issues in a text may connect with class discussion or course themes. This kind of interaction keeps you conscious of the REASON you are reading and the PURPOSES your instructor has in mind. Later in the term, when you are reviewing for a test or project, your marginalia will be useful memory triggers.
- Develop your own symbol system: asterisk a key idea, for example, or use an exclamation point for the surprising, absurd, bizarre . . . Like your marginalia, your hieroglyphs can help you reconstruct the important observations that you made at an earlier time. And they will be indispensable when you return to a text later in the term, in search of a passage, an idea for a topic, or while preparing for an exam or project.
- Get in the habit of hearing yourself ask questions—“what does this mean?” “why is he or she drawing that conclusion?” “why is the class reading this text?” etc. Write the questions down (in your margins, at the beginning or end of the reading, in a notebook, or elsewhere. They are reminders of the unfinished business you still have with a text: something to ask during class discussion, or to come to terms with on your own, once you’ve had a chance to digest the material further, or have done further reading.

3. Outline, summarize, analyze: take the information apart, look at its parts, and then try to put it back together again in language that is meaningful to you.

The best way to determine that you've really gotten the point is to be able to state it in your own words. Outlining the argument of a text is a version of annotating, and can be done quite informally in the margins of the text, unless you prefer the more formal Roman numeral model you may have learned in high school. Outlining enables you to see the skeleton of an argument: the thesis, the first point and evidence (and so on), through the conclusion. With weighty or difficult readings, that skeleton may not be obvious until you go looking for it. Summarizing accomplishes something similar, but in sentence and paragraph form, and with the connections between ideas made explicit. Analyzing adds an evaluative component to the summarizing process—it requires you not just to restate main ideas, but also to test the logic, credibility, and emotional impact of an argument. In analyzing a text, you reflect upon and weigh in on how effectively or how sloppily its argument has been made. Questions to ask:

- What is the writer asserting is true or valid (that is, what is he or she trying to convince me of? What am I being asked to believe or accept?)
- Why should I accept the writer's claim(s) as true or valid? Or, conversely, why should I reject the writer's claim(s)?
- What reasons or evidence does the author supply me, and how effective is the evidence?
- What is fact? And what is opinion?
- Is there anywhere that the reasoning breaks down? Are there things that do not make sense?

4. Look for repetitions and patterns:

These are often indications of what an author considers crucial and what he expects you to glean from his argument. The way language is chosen or used can also alert you to ideological positions, hidden agendas or biases. Be watching for:

- Recurring images
- Repeated words, phrases, types of examples, or illustrations
- Consistent ways of characterizing people, events, or issues

5. Contextualize: After you've finished reading, put the reading in perspective.

- When was it written or where was it published? Do these factors change or otherwise affect how you view a piece?
- Also view it through the lens of your own experience. Your understanding of the words on the page and their significance is always shaped by what you have come to know and value from living in a particular time and place.

6. Compare and Contrast: Fit this text into an ongoing dialogue

- At what point in the term does this reading come? Why that point, do you imagine?
- How does it contribute to the main concepts and themes of the course?
- How does it compare (or contrast) to the ideas presented by texts that come before it? Does it continue a trend, shift direction, or expand the focus of previous readings?
- How has your thinking been altered by this reading or how has it affected your response to the issues and themes of the course?

§Source: Harvard College Library, http://hcl.harvard.edu/research/guides/lamont_handouts/interrogatingtexts.html#top

Strategies for Effective Analytical Reading in AP English

Use these questions to get you started in your analysis of readings for class. As the semester goes on and you are used to more in-depth thinking, you will add questions. Think of this as a working document.

1. What is the text about? To answer this question, you need to:
 - Take notes
 - For each paragraph, list a word or phrase that identifies the point of the paragraph
 - Collect your notes and phrases to create a summary of the piece

2. How is the text structured? To answer this question, you need to:
 - Identify which of the statements function as claims, premises or reasons, evidence, and conclusions
 - Be able to describe the structure or composition of the essay
 - Read for relationships between sentences and paragraphs

3. How would you describe the language of the text? To answer this question, you need to:
 - Examine the syntax, diction, tone, and figures of speech used by the author
 - Be able to describe the effect of each of these elements

4. To whom is the text addressed? How do you know this? To answer this question, you need to:
 - Use historical or contextual evidence to speculate about the intended audience
 - Identify the speaker's tone

5. What effect does the text have on the reader? To answer this question, you need to:
 - Identify rhetorical strategies used by the author
 - Examine your emotional and intellectual responses to the text
 - Figure out how the rhetorical strategies create the intellectual and emotional effects

6. What is the text arguing? To answer this question, you need to:
 - Put the main points of all the paragraphs together to see what argument emerges
 - Read for implied meaning
 - Read for the relationships between sentences and paragraphs
 - Look at the structure, language, and subject to see how these elements work together to produce an argument

7. Is the text effective at its goal? Why? To answer this question, you need to:
 - Identify the point or argument of the text
 - Consider the rhetorical strategies at work in the text
 - Determine whether the strategies work to supplement the point or argument

GAG* Sheet (*Grammar at a Glance)

Subject Predicate DO IO PN PA OP OC	Noun Pronoun Verb Adjective Adverb Conjunction Preposition Interjection	Independent Clause (I) Dependent (D) / subordinate clause: *Adjective clause *Adverb clause *Noun clause	Coordinating Conjunctions For But And Or Nor Yet So	ADJ ⇌ PRO. ADV ⇒ V, ADJ. or ADV.
		Prepositions The mouse ran ___ the clock.	Appositive =placed beside another N to identify or explain it Appositive phrase = appositive + modifiers	
Book Magazine Newspaper, Film "Short Story" "Song" "Article" "Essay"		It is=it's Possessive it=its	Transitional expressions: as a result, for example, in other words, at any rate, in addition, on	
		Singular subject + singular verb <u>John is</u> going to the office. Plural subject + plural verb <u>John and Mary are</u> going to the office.	Capitalize Specific names of persons, places, things. Stone Mountain / mountain Atlantic Ocean / ocean President Bush / man	Someone left his or her umbrella. One of the boys left his umbrella.
Adjective Phrase A prepositional phrase functioning as an adjective. The boys <u>from GHS</u> tried	Adverb Phrase A prepositional phrase functioning as an adverb.	Simple - I Compound = I ; I Complex = I+ D Compound-Complex=I + D + I	S-V S-V-DO S-V-IO-DO S-V-DO-OC S-LV-PN S-LV PA	Interjections- Wow, huh? Shoot, blah! Duh!
Misplaced/Dangling Modifiers -Filling the air with thick smoke, we watched the garage burn. (did we fill the air with smoke?) -Joan bought a new DVD player for the family which never worked well. (did the family or the DVD not work well?) -The car went off the road while trying to read the map. (was the car trying to read the map?)		Posses-sives My Mine Your Yours His Her	Who/Whom Nominative=Who/whoever Objective = Whom/whomever	
Gerunds are -ing NOUNS and can do anything a noun can do. <u>Spelling</u> is an easy subject. SUBJECT She is proficient in <u>spelling</u> . OP I like <u>swimming</u> . DO His hobby is <u>singing</u> . PN Mary expects to learn <u>typing</u> . Object of infinitive A gerund phrase is the gerund and the words that go with it. <u>Running a 5K</u> is especially satisfying.		(Colon) Indicates a list	Linking Verbs Am Is Are Was Were	Comma D,I. Items in a series City, State After nouns of address I, conjunction I. I, transition I.
;(Semicolon) -Between two or more independent clauses. I;I.	Adverb Phrases is a prepositional phrase that functions as an adverb.	Prepositional Phrases begin with a preposition and end with a N or PRO.		Adjective Phrase is a prepositional phrase that functions as an adjective.
Subordinating conjunctions After, although, as, as if, as much as, as though, as well as, because, before, even though, how, if, in order that, provided,		Correlative conjunctions Both...and		
		Conjunctive adverbs - Also, anyway, besides, consequently, furthermore, however, still, instead, likewise, meanwhile,		

DIDLS

Title: _____ NAME(S) _____

Page #s: _____, starting at _____ and ending _____

<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">D</p> <p>The author’s choice of words and their connotations—What words appear to have been chosen specifically for their effects? What effect do these words have on your mood as the reader? What do they seem to indicate about the author’s tone?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">I</p> <p>The use of descriptions that appeal to sensory experience—What images are especially vivid? To what sense do these appeal? What effect do these images have on your mood as a reader? What do they seem to indicate about the author’s tone?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">D</p> <p>Facts included or those omitted—What details has the author specifically included? What details has the author apparently left out? What effect do these included and excluded details have on your mood as a reader? What do these included and excluded details seem to indicate about the author’s tone?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">L</p> <p>Characteristics of the body of words use (slang, jargon, scholarly language, etc.)—How could the language be described? How does the language affect your mood as a reader? What does the language seem to indicate about the author’s tone?</p>	
<p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">S</p> <p>The way the sentences are constructed—Are the sentences simple, compound, declarative, varied, etc.? How do these structures affect your mood as a reader? What do these structures seem to indicate about the author’s tone? Is the emphasis on nouns or verbs? What effect does this have?</p>	

SOAPSTone

Text Title: _____ Beginning at _____ and ending at _____

<p>Speaker –Who is the voice that is speaking and what rhetorical devices does he use – style?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The voice that is speaking. <p>Identification of the historical person (or group of people) who created the primary source. What attributes identify the speaker? Speaker’s perspective and relationship to the text affect how text is perceived</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do we know about this historic or contemporary person? • What role does he play in an historic event? 	
<p>Occasion– What event or catalyst initiated writing?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the time and place, the context in which the primary source was created? • What is the geographic and historic intersection at which this source was produced? 	
<p>Audience—To whom is the piece directed?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the writing intended to challenge a predicted point of view? To build on a predicted shared point of view? • Is the audience a peer group? Superiors? Other? • Are there both intended and unintended audiences? 	
<p>Purpose – What is the reason behind text?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why was it written? What goal did the author have in mind? • What is the reader supposed to think or do as a result of reading/hearing this? 	
<p>Subject – What is the general topic or main idea?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State the subject in a few words or phrases 	
<p>Tone – What is the attitude of author toward the subject?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine the choice of words, emotions expressed, imagery, etc., (DIDLS) used to determine the speaker’s attitude. 	

Rhetorical Analysis Rubric

High...concise, articulate; commentary specific; well organized; strong evidence; precise language

9 Essays earning a score of 9 meet the criteria for a score of 8 and, in addition, are especially sophisticated in their argument, thorough in their development, or impressive in their control of language.

8 Effective Essays earning a score of 8 **effectively** analyze* how Capote uses rhetorical strategies to convey his message. They develop their analysis with evidence and explanations that are appropriate and convincing, referring to the passage explicitly or implicitly. The prose demonstrates a consistent ability to control a wide range of the elements of effective writing but is not necessarily flawless.

Medium...accurate points; some insufficient analysis; doesn't rise above ordinary; some summary; lacks deep perceptions; simple analysis at times

7 Essays earning a score of 7 meet the criteria for a score of 6 but provide more complete explanation, more thorough development, or a more mature prose style.

6 Adequate Essays earning a score of 6 **adequately** analyze how Capote uses rhetorical strategies to convey his message to his audience. They develop their analysis with evidence and explanations that are appropriate and sufficient, referring to the passage explicitly or implicitly. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but generally the prose is clear.

5 Essays earning a score of 5 analyze how Capote uses rhetorical strategies to convey his message to his audience. The evidence or explanations used may be uneven, inconsistent, or limited. The writing may contain lapses in diction or syntax, but it usually conveys the student's ideas.

Low...attempts to discuss topic; some relevant points; unfocused or vague at times.

4 Inadequate Essays earning a score of 4 **inadequately** analyze how Capote uses rhetorical strategies to convey his message to his audience. These essays may misunderstand the passage, misrepresent the strategies Capote uses, or may analyze these strategies inaccurately. The evidence or explanations used may be inappropriate, insufficient, or less convincing. The prose generally conveys the student's ideas but may be less consistent in controlling the elements of effective writing.

3 Essays earning a score of 3 meet the criteria for a score of 4 but demonstrate less success in analyzing Capote's use of rhetorical strategies to convey his message to his audience. They are less perceptive in their understanding of the passage or Capote's strategies, or the explanation or examples may be particularly limited or simplistic. The essays may show less maturity in control of writing.

2 Little Success Essays earning a score of 2 demonstrate **little success** in analyzing how Capote uses rhetorical strategies to convey his message to his audience. These essays may misunderstand the prompt, misread the passage, fail to analyze the strategies Capote uses, or substitute a simpler task by responding to the prompt tangentially with unrelated, inaccurate, or inappropriate explanation. The prose often demonstrates consistent weaknesses in writing, such as grammatical problems, a lack of development or organization, or a lack of control.

1 Essays earning a score of 1 meet the criteria for a score of 2 but are undeveloped, especially simplistic in their explanation, or weak in their control of language.

0 Indicates an on-topic response that receives no credit, such as one that merely repeats the prompt.

– Indicates a blank response or one that is completely off topic.

American novelist and playwright Irwin Shaw (1913-1984) was also a distinguished short-story writer. One of his most enduring tales is "The Eighty-Yard Run," about a frustrated ex-jock whose single moment of triumph took place 15 years earlier during football practice.

In this, the opening paragraph of the story, Shaw relies on participial phrases and absolute phrases to bring to life Christian Darling's memory of his few seconds of fleeting glory.



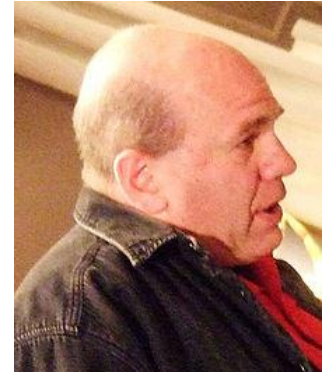
from *The Eighty-Yard Run* by Irwin Shaw

The pass was high and wide and he jumped for it, feeling it slap flatly against his hands, as he shook his hips to throw off the halfback who was diving at him. The center floated by, his hands desperately brushing Darling's knee as Darling picked his feet up high and delicately ran over a blocker and an opposing linesman in a jumble on the ground near the scrimmage line. He had ten yards in the clear and picked up speed, breathing easily, feeling his thigh pads rising and falling against his legs, listening to the sound of cleats behind him, pulling away from them, watching the other backs heading him off toward the sidelines, the whole picture, men closing in on him, the blockers fighting for position, the ground he had to cross, all suddenly clear in his head, for the first time in his life not a meaningless confusion of men, sounds, speed. He smiled a little to himself as he ran, holding the ball lightly in front of him with his two hands, his knees pumping high, his hips twisting in the almost girlish run of a back in a broken field. The first halfback came at him as he fed him his leg, then swung at the last moment, took the shock of the man's shoulder without breaking stride, ran right through him, his cleats biting securely to the turf. There was only the safety man now, coming warily at him, his arms crooked, hands spread. Darling tucked the ball in, spurted at him, driving hard, hurling himself along, his legs pounding knees high, all two hundred pounds bunched into controlled attack. He was sure he was going to get past the safety man. Without thought, his arm and legs working beautifully together, he headed right for the safety man, stiff-armed him, feeling the blood spurt instantaneously from the man's nose into his hand, seeing his face go awry, head turned, mouth pulled to one side. He pivoted away keeping the arm locked, dropping the safety man as he ran easily toward the goal line, with the drumming of cleats diminishing behind him.

First published in *Playboy* magazine (May 1955), "The Eighty-Yard Run" appears in Irwin Shaw's *Short Stories: Five Decades*, originally published by Delacorte Press in 1978 and reprinted in 2000 by the University of Chicago Press.

Journalist David Simon has served as a writer and producer on two of the most highly acclaimed programs to appear on American television: Homicide: Life on the Street (NBC, 1993 to 2000) and The Wire (HBO, 2002-2008). Both programs were inspired by Simon's Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets (1991), a book that chronicles the work of the homicide unit of the Baltimore Police Department.

In the following passage from Homicide, Simon relies on a series of analogies to convey, from the dual perspectives of detective and suspect, what goes on in a police interrogation room.



Inside the Interrogation Room from Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets*, by David Simon

Homicide detectives in Baltimore like to imagine a small, open window at the top of the long wall in the large interrogation room. More to the point, they like to imagine their suspects imagining a small, open window at the top of the long wall. The open window is the escape hatch, the Out. It is the perfect representation of what every suspect believes when he opens his mouth during interrogation. Every last one envisions himself parrying questions with the right combination of alibi and excuse; every last one sees himself coming up with the right words, then crawling out the window to go home and sleep in his own bed. More often than not, a guilty man is looking for the Out from his first moments in the interrogation room; in that sense, the window is as much the suspect's fantasy as the detective's mirage.

The effect of the illusion is profound, distorting as it does the natural hostility between hunter and hunted, transforming it until it resembles a relationship more symbiotic than adversarial. That is the lie, and when the roles are perfectly performed, deceit surpasses itself, becoming manipulation on a grand scale and ultimately an act of betrayal. Because what occurs in an interrogation room is indeed little more than a carefully staged drama, a choreographed performance that allows a detective and his suspect to find common ground where none exists. There, in a carefully controlled purgatory, the guilty proclaim their malefactions, though rarely in any form that allows for contrition or resembles an unequivocal admission.

In truth, catharsis in the interrogation room occurs for only a few rare suspects, usually those in domestic murders or child abuse cases wherein the leaden mass of genuine remorse can crush anyone who is not hardened to his crime. But the greater share of men and women brought downtown take no interest in absolution. Ralph Waldo Emerson rightly noted that for those responsible, the act of murder "is no such ruinous thought as poets and romancers will have it; it does not unsettle him, or frighten him from his ordinary notice of trifles." And while West Baltimore is a universe or two from Emerson's nineteenth-century Massachusetts hamlet, the observation is still useful. Murder often doesn't unsettle a man. In Baltimore, it usually doesn't even ruin his day.

* David Simon's Homicide: A Year on the Killing Streets was published by Houghton Mifflin in 1991 and reprinted by Holt Paperbacks in 2006.

*In the opening chapter of his entertaining travel book *Neither Here Nor There* (1992), journalist Bill Bryson recalls his first visit to Europe as a college student 20 years earlier. In the following paragraph from that chapter, Bryson uses lists and anaphora to convey how "smitten" he was by his first impression of Luxembourg City.*



from *Neither Here Nor There: Travels in Europe** by Bill Bryson

I had brought with me a yellow backpack so enormous that when I went through customs I half expected to be asked, "Anything to declare? Cigarettes? Alcohol? Dead horse?" and spent the day teetering beneath it through the ancient streets of Luxembourg city in a kind of vivid haze--an unfamiliar mixture of excitement and exhaustion and intense optical stimulation. Everything seemed so vivid and acutely focused and new. I felt like someone stepping out of doors for the first time. It was all so different: the language, the money, the cars, the license plates on the cars, the bread, the food, the newspapers, the parks, the people. I had never seen a zebra crossing before, never seen a tram, never seen an unsliced loaf of bread (never even considered it an option), never seen anyone wearing a beret who expected to be taken seriously, never seen people go to a different shop for each item of dinner or provide their own shopping bags, never seen feathered pheasants and unskinned rabbits hanging in a butcher's window or a pig's head smiling on a platter, never seen a packet of Gitanes or the Michelin man. And the people--why, they were Luxembourgers. I don't know why this amazed me so, but it did. I kept thinking: "That man over there, he's a Luxembourger. And so is that girl. They don't know anything about the New York Yankees, they don't know the theme tune to the Mickey Mouse Club, they are from another world." It was just wonderful.

* From Chapter One, "To the North," of *Neither Here Nor There: Travels in Europe*, by Bill Bryson, published by William Morrow and Company in 1992, reprinted in paperback by Harper Perennial in 1999.

In these three paragraphs from the short story "Midair," Frank Conroy relies on a variety of sentence structures to convey Jack's memory of winning a Ford convertible in a church raffle. Note, in particular, Conroy's effective use of appositives and absolute phrases to add key details.



from "Midair"* by Frank Conroy

He drifts away, remembering sophomore year and the old Mercury he'd bought from Elvin Marsdale in French House. A big, top-heavy brute of a car, it had broken down constantly, forcing him to spend as much time in junkyards looking for parts as on the road. When, finally, his tuned ear told him the engine itself was dying--inexorable death from the inside, rings totally worn, valves gasping, driveshaft groaning--he'd sold it to an ignorant graduate student at a slight profit.

For awhile he had no car, and then an extraordinary piece of luck occurred--he won a Ford convertible in a lottery, a new model full equipped with accessories, white walls, and a St. Christopher's medal. He suspected fraud, a telephone prank on the part of his classmates, but when he showed up at the rectory of an enormous church in downtown New Haven the car was indeed there, parked in an inner courtyard, and when he handed over the lottery ticket a fat priest gave him a set of keys, the registration, and a slap on the back. In the courtyard he walked around the car several times. The chrome gleamed with almost unbearable intensity. He could see a distorted image of himself in the waxed black body, his face slipping like oil over the curved surfaces. He was afraid to touch the car. When he got in he was afraid to start the engine. He stared at his eyes in the mirror (familiar blue--he was apparently there) for several moments before adjusting the glass. Then he pushed the seat back a couple of notches, turned the ignition, and rolled slowly out of the courtyard and onto the street.

The car became his in time, of course, but it was never entirely his. There was an aura of the supernatural clinging to it until the end, until trade-in. In dreams the fat priest asked for it back. He treated the car badly.

* "Midair" appears in Frank Conroy's story collection *Midair*, published by Dutton in 1970 and reprinted by Penguin in 1986.

American author Alexander Theroux has described writing as "an assault on cliché," and his novels, essays, and poems are distinguished by stylistic inventiveness and wit. In the following excerpts from a short essay on the camel, he both informs and delights--often relying on appositives to clarify and amplify his observations.



from "How Curious the Camel"* by Alexander Theroux

It is a beast of great mystery, an ancient enigma--the camel, according to legend, alone knows the 100th name of Allah. It is the ultimate paradox of whole parts: a mode of transportation, of exchange, of sustenance, indeed, of survival itself. . . .

Arabian camels have one hump. This is the famed dromedary, the runner. Many nomads might be astonished to see the two-humped Bactrian variety of central Asia, a slow, plodding beast of burden. The distinction, like that between stalactites and stalagmites, has confused schoolboys for generations.

A camel has been described as a horse planned by a committee. It has a comic munch of a face--loony, serene and disgusted all at once--with liquid eyes that shine bottle-green at night. Its eyelashes are as long as Ann Sheridan's. Its large nostrils can close against blowing sand. A ruminant, it chews its cud--the half-chewed slop that the animal sucks back up to its mouth with a slobbering sound as it plods along. . . .

The camel is called the Ship of the Desert--its habitat. It survives on guddha--leaves, dried plants, grass and withered tribulus. It relies on its humpfat, as well, which is stiff and upright when in top condition but decreases in size when the camel is overworked.

It is indeed an intricate equation, the camel a beast of binaries: wild but domesticated; savage yet submissive; vile and vulnerable; patient as well as perverse. . . . This can proudly be said: it bears its load.

* Alexander Theroux's "How Curious the Camel" first appeared in Reader's Digest, February 1983.

In this "sidebar" from his memoir *Moab Is My Washpot* (1997), British actor, author, and humorist Stephen Fry explains why he harbors no anger toward the teachers who beat him--frequently, with great swats of a cane--during his years at Stouts Hill School. Although he does not argue in favor of corporal punishment, Fry insists that "the men who beat me were not swine" and the punishments "at least had the virtue of being over quickly."



On Corporal Punishment from *Moab Is My Washpot*, by Stephen Fry

We are living in a statistically rare and improbable period of British life. The last twenty years are the only twenty years of our history in which children have not been beaten for misbehaviour. Every Briton you can think of, from Chaucer to Churchill, from Shakespeare to Shilton, was beaten as a child. If you are under thirty, then you are the exception. Maybe we are on the threshold of a brave new world of balanced and beautiful Britons. I hope so.

You won't find me offering the opinion that beating is a good thing or recommending the return of the birch. I frankly regard corporal punishment as of no greater significance in the life of most human beings than bustles, hula-hoops, flared trousers, side-whiskers or any other fad. Until, that is, one says that it isn't. Which is to say, the moment mankind decides that a practice like beating is of significance then it becomes of significance. I should imagine that were I a child now and found myself being beaten by schoolmasters I would be highly traumatised by the experience, for every cultural signal would tell me that beating is, to use the American description, a "cruel and unusual punishment" and I would feel singled out for injustice and smart and wail accordingly.

Let's try--and God knows it's hard--to be logical about this. If we object to corporal punishment, and I assume we do, on what grounds is this objection based? On the grounds that it is wrong to cause a child pain? Well, I don't know about you, but when I recall childhood pain, I don't recall the pains of toothache, a thrashed backside, broken bones, stubbed toes, gashed knees or twisted ankles--I recall the pains of loneliness, boredom, abandonment, humiliation, rejection and fear. Those are the pains on which I might and, still sometimes do, dwell, and those pains, almost without exception, were inflicted on me by other children and by myself.

I have paused on this subject of corporal punishment because the issue is so culturally loaded today as to be almost impossible to inspect. It comes in so many people's minds very close to the idea of "abuse," a word which when used within ten spaces of the word "child" causes hysteria, madness and stupidity in almost everybody.

I know that had I dispassionately described to you the use of the cane without any comment, without summoning counsel for a conference in chambers, then many of you would have wondered what I was up to and whether I was entirely balanced. You will have to form your own judgements, but try to understand that when I think about being caned for repeatedly talking after lights out, or for Mobbing About In The Malt Queue, and other such mad prep-schooly infractions, I feel far less passion and distress than I do when I think about the times I was put into detention for crimes of which I was innocent. If it should so happen that you could prove to me that one of the masters who beat me may have derived sexual gratification from the practice, I would shrug my shoulders and say, "Poor old soul, at least he never harmed me." Abuse is exploitation of trust and exploitation of authority and I was lucky enough never to suffer from that or from any violation or cruelty, real or imagined.

It is a cliché that most clichés are true, but then like most clichés, that cliché is untrue.

Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will always hurt me.

Bones mend and become actually stronger in the very place they were broken and where they have knitted up; mental wounds can grind and ooze for decades and be re-opened by the quietest whisper.

* Source: *Moab Is My Washpot*, by Stephen Fry, published in the U.K. by Hutchinson (1997) and in the U.S. by Soho Press (1997).

American writer and humorist Ian Frazier is best known for his short essays in *The New Yorker* magazine and for his 1989 historical work, *Great Plains*, in which the following paragraph appears.

One critic has pointed to this lengthy series as evidence of Frazier's "immature e and unsophisticated" literary style. Other readers see it as an example of the artful playfulness that characterizes his best work.

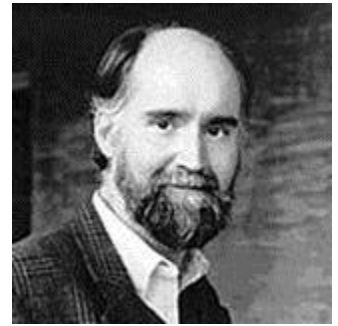


from *Great Plains** by Ian Frazier

Personally, I love Crazy Horse because even the most basic outline of his life shows how great he was; because he remained himself from the moment of his birth to the moment he died; because he knew exactly where he wanted to live, and never left; because he may have surrendered, but he was never defeated in battle; because, although he was killed, even the Army admitted he was never captured; because he was so free that he didn't know what a jail looked like; because at the most desperate moment of his life he only cut Little Big Man on the hand; because, unlike many people all over the world, when he met white men he was not diminished by the encounter; because his dislike of the oncoming civilization was prophetic; because the idea of becoming a farmer apparently never crossed his mind; because he didn't end up in the Dry Tortugas; because he never met the President; because he never rode on a train, slept in a boardinghouse, ate at a table; because he never wore a medal or a top hat or any other thing that white men gave him; because he made sure that his wife was safe before going to where he expected to die; because although Indian agents, among themselves, sometimes referred to Red Cloud as "red" and Spotted Tail as "spot," they never used a diminutive for him; because, deprived of freedom, power, occupation, culture, trapped in a situation where bravery was invisible, he was still brave; because he fought in self-defense, and took no one with him when he died; because, like the rings of Saturn, the carbon atom, and the underwater reef, he belonged to a category of phenomena which our technology had not then advanced far enough to photograph; because no photograph or painting or even sketch of him exists; because he is not the Indian on the nickel, the tobacco pouch, or the apple crate. Crazy Horse was a slim man of medium height with brown hair hanging below his waist and a scar above his lip. Now, in the mind of each person who imagines him, he looks different.

* Originally published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 1989, *Great Plains* was recently republished in paperback by Granta Books (2006).

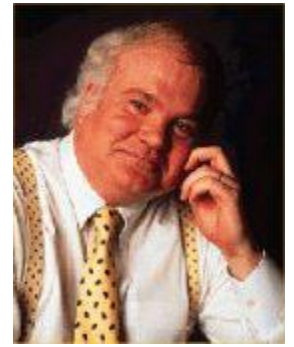
In both his fiction and nonfiction, American author Nicholson Baker pays extraordinary attention to the small details of everyday life--"things that you don't notice when you're noticing them." His first novel, The Mezzanine (1988), concerns the observations of a man riding an escalator after buying shoelaces on his lunch hour. In this footnote from Chapter Nine, Baker (or rather the book's narrator, Howie) celebrates the miraculous qualities of perforation in an unconventional encomium.



Nicholson Baker's Encomium to Perforation – Passage from The Mezzanine*

Perforation! Shout it out! The deliberate punctuated weakening of paper and cardboard so that it will tear along an intended path, leaving a row of fine-haired white pills or tuftlets on each new edge! It is a staggering conception, showing an age-transforming feel for the unique properties of pulped-wood fiber. Yet do we have national holidays to celebrate its development? Are festschrift volumes published honoring the dead greats in the field? People watch the news every night like robots thinking they are learning about their lives, never paying attention to the far more immediate developments that arrive unreported, on the zip-lock perforated top of the ice cream carton, in reply coupons bound in magazines and on the "Please Return This Portion" edging of bill stubs, on sheets of postage stamps and sheets of Publishers Clearing House magazine stamps, on paper towels, in rolls of plastic bags for produce at the supermarket, in strips of hanging file-folder labels. The lines dividing one year from another in your past are perforated, and the mental sensation of detaching a period of your life for closer scrutiny resembles the reluctant guided tearing of a perforated seam. The only educational aspect of the Ginn series of grade-school readers was the perforated tear-out pages in their workbooks: after you tore out the page (folding it back and forth over the line first to ready it for its rending), a little flap was left bound in the workbook that told the teacher in tiny sideways type what that page was meant to teach the student: the page I remember from first grade was a picture of Jack standing with a red wagon at the top left, and Spot waiting for him on the lower right, with a dotted line in a large Z shape connecting the two. The instructions were "Make Jack take the wagon to Spot," or something like that--and you clearly were not supposed to take the diagonal route, but rather were meant to travel this pointless Z with your crayon. The sideways explanation in the grown-up side of the perforation claimed that the Z path taught the child the ideal motion of the reading eyeballs--one line of type, a zag of a cartridge return, another line of type. I scorned the exercise only a little, because the dotted line itself was like the dotted line printed over perforations in reply coupons and intrinsically beautiful, despite the boy and dog at either end. I was taught, later, about the Indians of New York State, about Harriet Tubman and George Washington Carver and Susan B. Anthony--why don't I have any clear idea now, after years of schooling, how the perforation of the reply coupon or the roll of toilet paper is accomplished? My guesses are pitiable! Circular pizza cutters, with diamond-tipped radii? Zirconium templates, fatally sharp to the touch, stamping the paper with their barbed brailery? Why isn't the pioneer of perforation chiseled into the façades of libraries, along with Locke, Franklin, and the standard bunch of French Encyclopedists? They would have loved him! They would have devoted a whole page of beautifully engraved illustration, with "fig. 1's" and "fig. 2's," to the art.

*Best known for his semi-autobiographical novels *The Great Santini* and *The Lords of Discipline*, American author Pat Conroy has also published a memoir (*My Losing Season*) and a number of personal essays. In "Confessions of an Ex-Catholic," he examines his contradictory attitudes toward the Catholic Church: "I love the Church. I hate the Church. I am through with the Church. But I am still as Catholic as the Pope." Here he uses several specific examples to demonstrate the pleasure he takes in the "baroque and euphonic language" of the faith in which he was raised.*



from "Confessions of an Ex-Catholic" by Pat Conroy

From a God-struck child I have matured into a God-haunted adult. I wish to be rid of him yet fear that I never will completely. Just as I always will be American and Southern, I will always be Catholic. I left the Church but she has not left me.

This seems to be the universal condition of ex-Catholics. We said our goodbyes but did not totally escape. For this reason, I am presenting my children with a gift. They will never see the inside of a Catholic school or a Catholic Church. Their nightmares will be free of nuns, priests, fire, and crucified gods. I am raising them as nothing at all. They are free to make their own peace with the universe.

Yet I do not regret my education. I think no writer could regret a childhood which included such a baroque and euphonic language. I loved words like sodality, litany, and imprimatur. I loved the lists of names in the Proper of the Saints with its twisting, Latinesque evocations: Andifax, Chrysogonus, Zaphyrinus, Ubaldus, Polycarp, and Hermanigild. The priest I dressed for 6:15 mass wore an amice, a cincture, a chasuble, and a stole while he performed the sacrifice of the mass during the asperges or on Rogation Days or Quinquagesima Sunday. I loved the poetry of the Church prayers even though I once got in trouble for telling a nun that the Douay-Rheims version of the Bible (the Catholic version) was not as well written as the King James Version.

I loved Georgian chants, the sight of nuns at prayer on Good Friday, the sanctus bells, the covered forms of saints during Lent, the drum roll of the confiteor with all the sadness and elegance of a dead language filling a church and entering my bloodstream at the ear, and the sunburst of gold when the priest raised the monstrous chalice at consecration. I loved the ceremony, the adherence to tradition, and the arsenal of metaphor. I have never recovered from the vividness of its imagery, from the daze of its language. But I have never had a single day when I wished to be Catholic again.

American poet and scientist Loren Eiseley (1907-1977) followed in a rich tradition of natural-history writers, including Gilbert White, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, John Burroughs, and John Muir. As Andrew Angyal writes in the Encyclopedia of the Essay, "What Eiseley accomplished through his popular essays was to create an imaginative synthesis of literature and science--one that enlarged the power and range of the personal essay."

In this excerpt from "The Dream Animal," an informal study of human evolution, Eiseley relies on patterns of cause and effect to explore the mystery of the rapid emergence of the human brain.

from "The Dream Animal"* by Loren Eiseley

Somewhere in the glacial mists that shroud the past, Nature found a way of speeding the proliferation of brain cells and did it by the ruthless elimination of everything not needed to that end. We lost our hairy covering, our jaws and teeth were reduced in size, our sex life was postponed, our infancy became among the most helpless of any of the animals because everything had to wait upon the development of that fast-growing mushroom which had sprung up in our heads.

Now in man, above all creatures, brain is the really important specialization. As Gavin de Beer, Director of the British Museum of Natural History, has suggested, it appears that if infancy is lengthened, there is a correspondingly lengthier retention of embryonic tissues capable of undergoing change.† Here, apparently, is a possible means of stepping up brain growth. The anthropoid ape, because of its shorter life cycle and slow brain growth, does not make use of nearly the amount of primitive neuroblasts--the embryonic and migrating nerve cells--possible in the lengthier, and at the same time paradoxically accelerated development of the human child. The clock in the body, in other words, has placed a limit upon the pace at which the ape brain grows--a limit which, as we have seen, the human ancestors in some manner escaped. This is a simplification of a complicated problem, but it hints at the answer to Wallace's question of long ago as to why man shows such a strange, rich mental life, many of whose artistic aspects can have had little direct value measured in the old utilitarian terms of the selection of all qualities in the struggle for existence.

When these related potentialities for brain growth began, they carried man into a new world where the old laws no longer totally held. With every advance in language, in symbolic thought, the brain paths multiplied. Significantly enough, those which are most heavily involved in the life processes, and are most ancient, mature first. The most recently acquired and less specialized regions of the brain, the "silent areas," mature last. Some neurologists, not without reason, suspect that here may lie other potentialities which only the future of the race may reveal.

†Embryos and Ancestors, rev. ed. (New York, Oxford, 1951), p. 93.

*"The Dream Animal" by Loren Eiseley appeared in *The Immense Journey*, published in 1957 by Random House and currently available in a paperback edition published by Vintage Books.

An enormously popular writer of horror fiction for the past 35 years, Stephen King has more recently begun to attract significant critical attention as well. After collecting numerous Bram Stoker Awards, Locus Awards, and World Fantasy Awards, in 2003 he received the National Book Foundation's Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters Award.

In this excerpt from an article that first appeared in Playboy magazine in 1981, King examines the causes and effects of an experience that points, he says, to the "insanity" inside us all.



from "Why We Crave Horror Movies"* by Stephen King

When we pay our four or five bucks and seat ourselves at tenth-row center in a theater showing a horror movie, we are daring the nightmare.

Why? Some of the reasons are simple and obvious. To show that we can, that we are not afraid, that we can ride this roller coaster. Which is not to say that a really good horror movie may not surprise a scream out of us at some point, the way we may scream when the roller coaster twists through a complete 360 or plows through a lake at the bottom of the drop. And horror movies, like roller coasters, have always been the special province of the young; by the time one turns 40 or 50, one's appetite for double twists or 360-degree loops may be considerably depleted.

We also go to reestablish our feelings of essential normality; the horror movie is innately conservative, even reactionary. Freda Jackson as the horrible melting woman in *Die, Monster, Die!* confirms for us that no matter how far we may be removed from the beauty of a Robert Redford or a Diana Ross, we are still light-years from true ugliness.

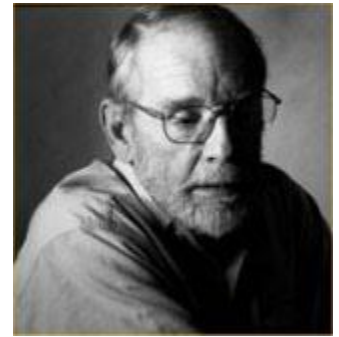
And we go to have fun.

Ah, but this is where the ground starts to slope away, isn't it? Because this is a very peculiar sort of fun, indeed. The fun comes from seeing others menaced--sometimes killed. One critic has suggested that if pro football has become the voyeur's version of combat, then the horror film has become the modern version of the public lynching.

* "Why We Crave Horror Movies," by Stephen King, was first published in Playboy magazine, January 1981.

*A staff writer for The New Yorker magazine since 1965, John McPhee is one of America's foremost writers of creative nonfiction. Known especially for his profiles and travel writings, McPhee has published 27 books, and in 1999 he was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for his geological study *Annals of the Former World*.*

Originally published in The New Yorker, McPhee's essay "Giving Good Weight" provides a detailed study of the vendors and customers at the Greenmarket in New York City. In this excerpt, he combines vivid descriptions with direct quotations in his sketch of a schoolteacher who works in the market during summer vacations.



Sketch of Derryck Brooks-Smith from "Giving Good Weight," by John McPhee

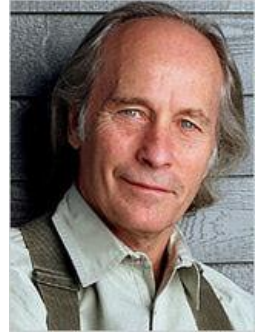
"These tomatoes come from a remote corner of Afghanistan," Derryck Brooks-Smith is saying to some hapless client. "They will send you into ecstasy." She is young and appears to believe him, but she may be in ecstasy already. Brooks-Smith is a physical masterpiece. He wears running shorts. Under a blue T-shirt, his breasts bulge. His calves and thighs are ribbed with muscle. His biceps are smooth brown loaves. His hair is short and for the most part black, here and there brindled with gray. His face is fine-featured, smile disarming. He continues about the tomatoes: "The smaller ones are from Hunza, a little country in the Himalayas. The people of Hunza attribute their longevity to these tomatoes. Yes, three pounds for a dollar. They also attribute their longevity to yogurt and a friendly family. I like your dress. It fits you well."

Brooks-Smith teaches at John Marshall Intermediate School, in Brooklyn. "A nice white name in a black neighborhood," he once remarked. He was referring to the name of the school, but he could as well have meant his own. He was born in the British West Indies. His family moved to New York in 1950, when he was ten. He has a master's degree from City University. "It is exciting for me to be up here in Harlem, among my own people," he has told me over the scale. "Many of them are from the South. They talk about Georgia, about South Carolina. They have a feeling for the farm a lot of people in the city don't have." He quotes Rimbaud to his customers. He fills up the sky for them with the "permanganate sunsets" of Henry Miller. He instructs them in nutrition. He lectures on architecture in a manner that makes them conclude correctly that he is talking about them. They bring him things. Books, mainly. Cards of salutation and farewell, anticipating his return to school. "Peace, brother, may you always get back the true kindness you give." The message is handwritten. The card and its envelope are four feet wide. A woman in her eighties who is a Jehovah's Witness hands him a book, her purpose to immortalize his soul. She will miss him. He has always given her a little more than good weight. "I love old people," he says when she departs. "We have a lot to learn from them."

John McPhee's "Giving Good Weight" originally appeared in *The New Yorker* magazine (July, 3, 1978) and serves as the title essay of his collection *Giving Good Weight*, published by Farrar, Straus Giroux in 1979, reprinted in paperback in 1994.

A failed writer, husband, and father, Frank Bascombe is a middle-aged real estate agent who has moved into his ex-wife's house in an effort to reconnect with his son and daughter. Bascombe is the narrator and protagonist of Richard Ford's fifth novel, Independence Day (1995), winner of both the Pulitzer Prize and the Pen/Faulkner Award.

In this passage from Chapter Five of Ford's novel, Bascombe reflects on his own behavior through a highly personal classification of a seemingly simple facial expression.



from Independence Day* by Richard Ford

Then, suddenly, peering up at the brassy fan listlessly turning, I for some reason wince--whing-crack!--as though a rock or a scary shadow or a sharp projectile had flashed close and just missed maiming me, making my whole head whip to the right, setting my heart to pounding thunk-a, thunk-a, thunk-a, thunk-a, exactly the way it did that summer evening Ann announced she was marrying Frank O'Dell and moving to Deep River and stealing my kids.

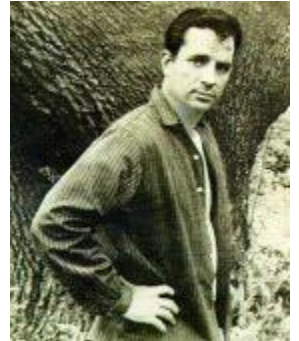
But why now?

There are wincers, of course, and there are other wincers. There is the "love wince," the shudder--often with accompanying animal groan--of hot-rivet sex imagined, followed frequently by a sense of loss thick enough to upholster a sofa. There is the "grief wince," the one you experience in bed at 5 a.m., when the phone rings and some stranger tells you your mother or your first son has "regretfully" expired; this is normally attended by a chest-emptying sorrow which is almost like relief but not quite. There is the "wince of fury," when your neighbor's Irish setter, Prince Sterling, has been barking at squirrels' shadows for months, night after night, keeping you awake and in an agitation verging on dementia, though unexpectedly you confront the neighbor at the end of the driveway at dusk, only to be told you're blowing the whole dog-barking thing way out of proportion, that you're too tightly wrapped and need to smell the roses. This wince is often followed by a shot to the chops and can also be called "the Billy Budd."

What I have just suffered, though, is none of these and has left me light-headed and tingling, as if an electrical charge had been administered via terminals strapped to my neck. Black spots wander my vision, my ears feel as though glass tumblers were pressed over them.

* Independence Day, by Richard Ford, was originally published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc. in 1995. It is currently available in a Vintage paperback (1996).

At the end of Jack Kerouac's novel On the Road, narrator Sal Paradise finds himself back where his cross-country journey began a year earlier--in New York City. What specific features of Kerouac's prose contribute to its colloquial flavor--the sense that Sal is talking to us?



from *On the Road** by Jack Kerouac

Suddenly I found myself on Times Square. I had traveled eight thousand miles around the American continent and I was back on Times Square; and right in the middle of a rush hour, too, seeing with my innocent road-eyes the absolute madness and fantastic hoorair of New York with its millions and millions hustling forever for a buck among themselves, the mad dream—grabbing, taking, giving, sighing, dying, just so they could be buried in those awful cemetery cities beyond Long Island City. The high towers of the land--the other end of the land, the place where Paper America is born. I stood in a subway doorway, trying to get enough nerve to pick up a beautiful long butt, and every time I stooped great crowds rushed by and obliterated it from my sight, and finally it was crushed. I had no money to go home in a bus. Paterson is quite a few miles from Times Square. Can you picture me walking those last miles though the Lincoln Tunnel or over the Washington Bridge and into New Jersey? It was dusk. Where was Hassel? I dug the square for Hassel; he wasn't there, he was in Riker's Island, behind bars. Where Dean? Where everybody? Where life? I had my home to go to, my place to lay my head down and figure the losses and figure the gain that I knew was in there somewhere too. I had to panhandle two bits for the bus. I finally hit a Greek minister who was standing around the corner. He gave me a quarter with a nervous look away. I rushed immediately to the bus.

* Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* (1957) was republished by Penguin in 1999.

British journalist Anthony Lane has been a film reviewer for The New Yorker magazine since 1993. "I'm not a creative writer," he once told an interviewer. "I don't write poetry or novels or drama but criticism, which is the eunuch of the family." In 2001 he received a National Magazine Award for Reviews and Criticism, and in 2002 he published Nobody's Perfect: Writings From The New Yorker (Knopf in the US; Picador in the UK).

In this passage from a review of the film The White Ribbon (2009), Lane compares two kinds of movies: those that merely entertain and those that encourage thoughtful discussion.

Two Kinds of Movies From "Happy Haneke"* by Anthony Lane

As a rough rule, cinema can be sundered into two halves: six o'clock films and nine o'clock films. Most movies are nine o'clock affairs, and none the worse for it. You get home from work, grab something to eat, head to the theatre, and enjoy the show. And so to bed--alone or entwined, but, either way, with dreams whose sweetness will not be crumbled or soured by what you saw onscreen. A six o'clock movie requires more organization: prebooked tickets, a restaurant table, the right friends. You're going to need them, because if all runs according to plan you will spend the second half of the evening tossing the movie--the impact and the substance of it--back and forth. So Persona is a six o'clock movie, though it won't leave you with much of an appetite. As is The Deer Hunter, whereas Platoon, for all its sound and fury, works fine for nine o'clock. The Reader is a nine o'clock movie that thinks it's a six o'clock. Groundhog Day is the opposite. And The White Ribbon? A six-o'clock movie, if ever I saw one.

*"Happy Haneke" by Anthony Lane was published in the October 5, 2009 issue of The New Yorker magazine.

Award-winning essayist and novelist Gretel Ehrlich has said that she's happiest when outdoors, whether on a ranch in Wyoming (The Solace of Open Spaces) or an ice sheet in Greenland (This Cold Heaven). In this paragraph from her first book, she compares two American sports, one distinctly regional, the other national.

Rodeo and Baseball – Comparison in The Solace of Open Spaces by Gretel Ehrlich*

Rodeo, like baseball, is an American sport and has been around almost as long. While Henry Chadwick was writing his first book of rules for the fledgling ball clubs in 1858, ranch hands were paying \$25 a dare to a kid who would ride five outlaw horses from the rough string in a makeshift arena of wagons and cars. The first commercial rodeo in Wyoming was held in Lander in 1895, just nineteen years after the National League was formed. Baseball was just as popular as bucking and roping contests in the West, but no one in Cooperstown, New York, was riding broncs. And that's been part of the problem. After 124 years, rodeo is still misunderstood. Unlike baseball, it's a regional sport (although they do have rodeos in New Jersey, Florida, and other eastern states); it's derived from and stands for the western way of life and the western spirit. It doesn't have the universal appeal of a sport contrived solely for the competition and winning; there is no ball bandied about between opposing players.

*Gretel Ehrlich's The Solace of Open Spaces was published by Viking Penguin in 1985.

Best known for his autobiographical studies of English village life in Cider with Rosie and As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning, Laurie Lee also wrote poems, plays, essays, and travel books. In this excerpt from the essay "Appetite," Lee uses a then-and-now comparison to illustrate his thesis: "One of the major pleasures in life is appetite, and one of our major duties should be to protect it."



from "Appetite"* by Laurie Lee

Fasting is an act of homage to the majesty of appetite. So I think we should arrange to give up our pleasures regularly--our food, our friends, our lovers--in order to preserve their intensity, and the moment of coming back to them. For this is the moment that renews and refreshes both oneself and the thing one loves. Sailors and travelers enjoyed this once, and so did hunters, I suppose. Part of the weariness of modern life may be that we live too much on top of each other, and are entertained and fed too regularly. Once we were separated by hunger both from our food and families, and then we learned to value both. The men went off hunting, and the dogs went with them; the women and children waved goodbye. The cave was empty of men for days on end; nobody ate, or knew what to do. The women crouched by the fire, the wet smoke in their eyes; the children wailed; everybody was hungry. Then one night there were shouts and the barking of dogs from the hills, and the men came back loaded with meat. This was the great reunion, and everybody gorged themselves silly, and appetite came into its own; the long-awaited meal became a feast to remember and an almost sacred celebration of life. Now we go off to the office and come home in the evenings to cheap chicken and frozen peas. Very nice, but too much of it, too easy and regular, served up without effort or wanting. We eat, we are lucky, our faces are shining with fat, but we don't know the pleasure of being hungry any more.

Too much of anything--too much music, entertainment, happy snacks, or time spent with one's friends--creates a kind of impotence of living by which one can no longer hear, or taste, or see, or love, or remember. Life is short and precious, and appetite is one of its guardians, and loss of appetite is a sort of death. So if we are to enjoy this short life we should respect the divinity of appetite, and keep it eager and not too much blunted.

*"The essay "Appetite" by Laurie Lee appears in the collection *I Can't Stay Too Long*, published by Atheneum in 1976.

Humorist Jean Shepherd is probably best known as the narrator of A Christmas Story (1983), a film based on a number of his autobiographical short stories. His distinctive colloquial prose style grew out of the yarns he frequently told on late-night radio during his many years as a broadcaster.

Here, in the essay-like introduction to his short story "The Endless Streetcar Ride," Shepherd relies on hyperbole to develop a memorable contrast between "them" and "us"--the "stars" and the "numberless ciphers."



from "The Endless Streetcar Ride Into the Night, and the Tinfoil Noose" by Jean Shepherd

Mewling, puking babes. That's the way we all start. Damply clinging to someone's shoulder, burping weakly, clawing our way into life. All of us. Then gradually, surely, we begin to divide into two streams, all marching together up that long yellow brick road of life, but on opposite sides of the street. One crowd goes on to become the Official people, peering out at us from television screens; magazine covers. They are forever appearing in newsreels, carrying attaché cases, surrounded by banks of microphones while the world waits for their decisions and statements. And the rest of us go on to become . . . just us.

They are the Prime Ministers, the Presidents, Cabinet members, Stars, dynamic molders of the Universe, while we remain forever the onlookers, the applauders of their real lives.

Forever down in the dark dungeons of our souls we ask ourselves:

"How did they get away from me? When did I make that first misstep that took me forever to the wrong side of the street, to become eternally part of the accursed, anonymous Audience?"

It seems like one minute we're all playing around back of the garage, kicking tin cans and yelling at girls, and the next instant you find yourself doomed to exist as an office boy in the Mail Room of Life, while another ex-mewling, puking babe sends down dicta, says "No comment" to the Press, and lives a real genuine Life on the screen of the world.

Countless sufferers at this hour are spending billions of dollars and endless man hours lying on analysts' couches, trying to pinpoint the exact moment that they stepped off the track and into the bushes forever.

It all hinges on one sinister reality that is rarely mentioned, no doubt due to its implacable, irreversible inevitability. These decisions cannot be changed, no matter how many brightly cheerful, buoyantly optimistic books on HOW TO ACHIEVE A RICHER, FULLER, MORE BOUNTIFUL LIFE or SEVEN MAGIC GOLDEN KEYS TO INSTANT DYNAMIC SUCCESS or THE SECRET OF HOW TO BECOME A BILLIONAIRE we read, or how many classes are attended for instruction in handshaking, back-slapping, grinning, and making After-Dinner speeches. Joseph Stalin was not a Dale Carnegie graduate. He went all the way. It is an unpleasant truth that is swallowed, if at all, like a rancid, bitter pill. A star is a star; a numberless cipher is a numberless cipher.

Even more eerie a fact is that the Great Divide is rarely a matter of talent or personality. Or even luck. Adolf Hitler had a notoriously weak handshake. His smile was, if anything, a vapid mockery. But inevitably his star zoomed higher and higher. Cinema luminaries of the first order are rarely blessed with even the modicum of Talent, and often their physical beauty leaves much to be desired. What is the difference between Us and Them, We and They, the Big Ones and the great, teeming rabble?

There are about four times in a man's life, or a woman's, too, for that matter, when unexpectedly, from out of the darkness, the blazing carbon lamp, the cosmic searchlight of Truth shines full upon them. It is how we react to those moments that forever seals our fate. One crowd simply puts on its sunglasses, lights another cigar, and heads for the nearest plush French restaurant in the jazziest section of town, sits down and orders a drink, and ignores the whole thing. While we, the Doomed, caught in the brilliant glare of illumination, see ourselves inescapably for what we are, and from that day on sulk in the weeds, hoping no one else will spot us.

"The Endless Streetcar Ride Into the Night, and the Tinfoil Noose" appears in Jean Shepherd's *In God We Trust: All Others Pay Cash*, first published by Doubleday in 1966 and reprinted in paperback by Main Street Books in 1991.

Born in Ireland and raised in the Netherlands, novelist Joseph O'Neill practiced law in England for ten years before moving to New York City, where he now writes for The Atlantic Monthly and plays for the Staten Island Cricket Club. His novel Netherland was nominated for the Man Booker Prize in 2008 and won the 2009 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction.

In this paragraph from Netherland, O'Neill's narrator recalls a cricket game played in a New York City park one summer afternoon. The coordinated words, phrases, and clauses not only advance the action but evoke a mood of increasing tension.



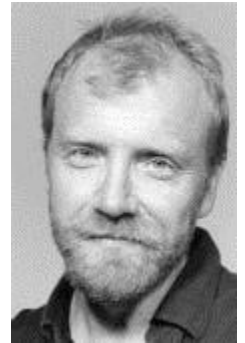
from *Netherland* by Joseph O'Neill

The men from St. Kitts batted for just over two hours. Throughout their innings their supporters maintained the usual hullabaloo of laughter and heckling and wisecracks from the field's east boundary, where they congregated in the leaves' shadows and drank rum out of paper cups and ate barbecued red snapper and chicken. "Beat the ball!" they shouted, and "The man chucking!" and, raising their arms into the scarecrow pose that signals a wide ball, "Wide, umpire, wide!" Our turn came to bat. As the innings wore on and the game grew tighter and more and more rum was drunk, the musical din started up again from the Toyota, where men had gathered once again, and the shouting of the spectators grew more emotional. In this atmosphere, by no means rare for New York cricket, the proceedings on and off the field became more and more combative. At a certain moment the visitors fell prey to the suspicion, apparently never far from the mind of cricketers in that city, that a conspiracy to rob them of victory was afoot, and the appeals of the fielders ("How's that, umpire? Ump!") assumed a bitter, disputatious character, and a fight nearly broke out between a fielder in the deep and an onlooker who had said something.

Netherland, by Joseph O'Neill, is published in Great Britain by Fourth Estate (2008) and in the United States by Pantheon Books (2008).

"I like style," George Saunders once told an interviewer. "I like to sound odd and, hopefully, unique." In the following two paragraphs from his short story "The Falls," Saunders achieves that distinction through cumulative sentences. In both the first paragraph (which is one long sentence) and the final sentence in paragraph two, he starts out with a simple statement and then accumulates details that serve to amplify, qualify, and describe what has come before.

from "The Falls"* by George Saunders



The school sat among maples on a hillside that sloped down to the wide Taganac River, which narrowed and picked up speed and crashed over Bryce Falls a mile downstream near Morse's small rental house, his embarrassingly small rental house, actually, which nevertheless was the best he could do and for which he knew he should be grateful although at times he wasn't a bit grateful and wondered where he'd gone wrong, although at other times he was quite pleased with the crooked little blue shack covered with peeling lead paint and felt great pity for the poor stiff's renting hazardous shitholes even smaller than his hazardous shithole, which was how he felt now as he came down into the bright sunlight and continued his pleasant walk home along the green river lined with expensive mansions whose owners he deeply resented.

Morse was tall and thin and as gray and sepulchral as a church about to be condemned. His pants were too short, and his face periodically broke into a tense, involuntary grin that quickly receded, as if he had just suffered a sharp pain. At work he was known to punctuate his conversations with brief wild laughs and gusts of inchoate enthusiasm and subsequent embarrassment, expressed by a sudden plunging of the hands into his pockets, after which he would yank his hands out of his pockets, too ashamed of his own shame to stand there merely grimacing for even an instant longer.

* Published originally in The New Yorker magazine, "The Falls" appears in the short story collection Pastoralia by George Saunders (Riverhead, 2000).

Born in Leicester, England, Julian Barnes worked as a lexicographer for the Oxford English Dictionary before becoming a literary critic and author. He has published more than a dozen novels (including crime fiction under the pseudonym Dan Kavanagh) and has been shortlisted three times for the Man Booker Prize.

In this excerpt from "MPTV," an essay about the televised proceedings of the House of Commons ("the best show in town"), Barnes defines the essential characteristics of the pantomime, a form of popular theater in England since the 16th century. "The British," Barnes says, "have managed to export some surprising things--cricket, marmalade, the humor of Benny Hill--but they have never succeeded in unloading the New Year pantomime on anyone else."



from MPTV* by Julian Barnes

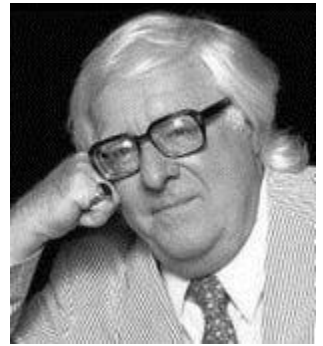
The panto has its historical roots in the harlequinade and was cross-fertilized by the Victorian music hall. In essence, it consists of a fairy tale--the story of Cinderella, Mother Goose, Alladin, Dick Whittington--that, while drawing on a traditional narrative line, is constantly updated by topical references, often of a satirical nature. Its central modes are farce and melodrama, with large openings for the miraculous and the sentimental; it aims itself simultaneously at small children, who follow its twists with an awesome directness of response, and at their accompanying parents, who are wooed by coarse double entendres supposedly above the heads of their offspring. It includes two elements with powerful appeal to the British: cross-dressing (the principal boy is always played by a girl, and the Pantomime Dame by a middle-aged man) and comic animals (who aren't played by themselves, either). It retains, if in an attenuated form, a worldview by which Britannia rules the waves and foreigners are a humorous supporting act. Finally, it boasts a promiscuous permeability to modern culture, so that at any moment the stage is likely to be invaded by some two-minute television cult that the parents have barely caught on to. Darth Vader outfits jostle with TV magicians, old Empire racism with Green jokes, and all is resolved with much audience participation and a join-in-or-die singsong. Perhaps, on reflection, it isn't too surprising that the panto hasn't caught on in other countries.

It has always been a ramshackle, catchall, demotic genre. Parents returning to their first panto since they themselves were kids are apt to bemoan the debasement of this popular old British art form, but the truth is that it has always been debased--that's to say, various, eclectic, vulgar, referential, and topical. Whether one panto is actually "better" than any other is almost impossible for an adult eye to judge. Perhaps more to the point is that the pantomime is usually a child's first introduction to the theater, and that the allure of the tiered darkness, velvet curtains, and interval ice cream seems undiminished and undiminshable. Amazingly, the pantomime doesn't put kids off the theater for life.

* First published as "Letter from London" in The New Yorker magazine, March 5, 1990, "MPTV" was reprinted in Letters from London, by Julian Barnes (Vintage Books, 1995).

One of America's most popular writers of science fiction and fantasy, Ray Bradbury has been entertaining readers for almost 70 years. Many of his novels and stories--including Fahrenheit 451, The Martian Chronicles, Dandelion Wine, and Something Wicked This Way Comes--have been adapted into feature-length films.

In this passage from Dandelion Wine (1957), a semi-autobiographical novel set in the summer of 1928, a young boy describes the family ritual of gathering on the porch after supper--a practice "so good, so easy and so reassuring that it could never be done away with."



Summer Rituals from Dandelion Wine* by Ray Bradbury

About seven o'clock you could hear the chairs scraping back from the tables, someone experimenting with a yellow-toothed piano, if you stood outside the dining-room window and listened. Matches being struck, the first dishes bubbling in the suds and tinkling on the wall racks, somewhere, faintly, a phonograph playing. And then as the evening changed the hour, at house after house on the twilight streets, under the immense oaks and elms, on shady porches, people would begin to appear, like those figures who tell good or bad weather in rain-or-shine clocks.

Uncle Bert, perhaps Grandfather, then Father, and some of the cousins; the men all coming out first into the syrupy evening, blowing smoke, leaving the women's voices behind in the cooling-warm kitchen to set their universe aright. Then the first male voices under the porch brim, the feet up, the boys fringed on the worn steps or wooden rails where sometime during the evening something, a boy or a geranium pot, would fall off.

At last, like ghosts hovering momentarily behind the door screen, Grandma, Great-grandma, and Mother would appear, and the men would shift, move, and offer seats. The women carried varieties of fans with them, folded newspapers, bamboo whisks, or perfumed kerchiefs, to start the air moving about their faces as they talked.

What they talked of all evening long, no one remembered next day. It wasn't important to anyone what the adults talked about; it was only important that the sounds came and went over the delicate ferns that bordered the porch on three sides; it was only important that the darkness filled the town like black water being poured over the houses, and that the cigars glowed and that the conversations went on, and on. . . .

Sitting on the summer-night porch was so good, so easy and so reassuring that it could never be done away with. These were rituals that were right and lasting: the lighting of pipes, the pale hands that moved knitting needles in the dimness, the eating of foil-wrapped, chill Eskimo Pies, the coming and going of all the people.

* Ray Bradbury's novel Dandelion Wine was originally published by Bantam Books in 1957. It is currently available in the U.S. in a hardcover edition published by William Morrow (1999), and in the U.K. in a paperback edition published by HarperVoyager (2008).

Recognized by John Updike as the best essayist of his generation, Edward Hoagland is especially well known for his nature and travel writing. This passage, however, is drawn from an essay on boxing--a "waning sport," says Hoagland, and one of the most "poignant ways to earn a living." Here he describes the old Gramercy Gym on East 14th Street in Manhattan.



The Gramercy Gym from "Heart's Desire," by Edward Hoagland*

The Gramercy Gym is two flights up some littered, lightless stairs that look like a mugger's paradise, though undoubtedly they are the safest stairs in New York. Inside, two dozen bodies are chopping up and down, self-clocked, each fellow cottoned in his dreams. Some are skipping rope, turbaned in towels, wrapped in robes in order to sweat. These are white-looking figures, whereas the men who are about to spar have on dark headguards that close grimly around the face like an executioner's hood. There are floor-length mirrors and mattresses for exercising and rubdowns, and two speedbags banging like drums, and three heavy bags swinging even between the rounds with the momentum of more than a decade of punches. The bell is loud, the fighters jerk like eating and walking birds, hissing through their teeth as they punch, their feet sneaking the floor with shuffly sounds. They wear red shoelaces in white shoes, and peanut-colored gloves, or if they're Irish they're in green. They are learning to move their feet to the left and right, to move in and out, punching over, then under an opponent's guard, and other repetitive skills without which a man in the ring becomes a man of straw. The speedbags teach head-punching, the heavy bags teach body work, and one bag pinned to the wall has both a head and a torso diagrammed, complete with numbers, so that the trainer can shout out what punches his fighter should throw. "Bounce, bounce!" the trainers yell.

The memoir Farewell to Manzanar (1973) recounts the experiences of the Wakatsuki family at an American internment camp for Japanese-Americans during World War II. In this excerpt, Jeanne Wakatsuki, just seven years old at the time of her imprisonment, provides a clear-eyed description of the "shack" in which the family was forced to live for almost three years.



From Farewell to Manzanar* by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston

After dinner we were taken to Block 16, a cluster of fifteen barracks that had just been finished a day or so earlier--although finished was hardly the word for it. The shacks were built of one thickness of pine planking covered with tarpaper. They sat on concrete footings, with about two feet of open space between the floorboards and the ground. Gaps showed between the planks, and as the weeks passed and the green wood dried out, the gaps widened. Knotholes gaped in the uncovered floor.

Each barracks was divided into six units, sixteen by twenty feet, about the size of a living room, with one bare bulb hanging from the ceiling and an oil stove for heat. We were assigned two of these for the twelve people in our family group; and our official family "number" was enlarged by three digits--16 plus the number of this barracks. We were issued steel army cots, two brown army blankets each, and some mattress covers, which my brothers stuffed with straw.

The first task was to divide up what space we had for sleeping. Bill and Woody contributed a blanket each and partitioned off the first room: one side for Bill and Tomi, one side for Woody and Chizu and their baby girl. Woody also got the stove, for heating formulas.

The people who had it hardest during the first few months were young couples, many of whom had married just before the evacuation began, in order not to be separated and sent to different camps. Our two rooms were crowded, but at least it was all in the family. My oldest sister and her husband were shoved into one of those sixteen-by-twenty-foot compartments with six people they had never seen before--two other couples, one recently married like themselves, the other with two teenage boys. Partitioning off a room like that wasn't easy. It was bitter cold when we arrived, and the wind did not abate. All they had to use for room dividers were those army blankets, two of which were barely enough to keep one person warm. They argued over whose blanket should be sacrificed and later argued about noise at night--the parents wanted their boys asleep by 9:00 p.m.--and they continued arguing over matters like that for six months, until my sister and her husband left to harvest sugar beets in Idaho. It was grueling work up there, and wages were pitiful, but when the call came through camp for workers to alleviate the wartime labor shortage, it sounded better than their life at Manzanar. They knew they'd have, if nothing else, a room, perhaps a cabin of their own.

*The memoir Farewell to Manzanar by Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston and James D. Houston was originally published by Houghton Mifflin in 1973. It is currently available in a paperback edition published by Bantam Books.

Biographer and theater critic John Lahr, the son of comic actor Bert Lahr, has been composing profiles for The New Yorker magazine since 1992. The following paragraph is drawn from the conclusion of his 10,000-word profile of David Mamet. Notice how the description of the cabin where the playwright works, the references to the books on his table, and the brief quotations from Mamet's sister and from Mamet himself all serve to reveal aspects of character.

from "Fortress Mamet"* by John Lahr



Mamet types with his back to the window on a blue Olympia manual typewriter, above which a kerosene lamp is suspended by a chain from a beam smudged with black smoke. The special calm of the place is in part the peace of having no electricity; it is also the peace of the activity that goes on there. Writing has always been Mamet's way of containing terror, or what he calls "mental vomit." "David's brain is a very busy place. It's very cluttered," Lynn Mamet says. "Writing's the only thing that stops the thinking, you know," Mamet says. "It stops all that terrible noise that's in there." In "The Edge," where the billionaire bookworm thinks himself out of the backwoods, Mamet quite literally shows the triumph of thought over terror. It's something that he clearly works hard at in his own life. Across the room, on a table in front of the sofa, his serious reading is laid out: D.W. Winnicott's "Thinking About Children"; a special Hebrew prayer about "the good wife," whose twenty-two verses are traditionally read by the husband to his wife on holy days; and Seneca's "Letters from a Stoic." Mamet has underlined only one passage in Seneca: "Each day . . . acquire something which will help you to face poverty, or death, and other ills as well."

* David Mamet's profile of David Mamet appeared in the November 17, 1997 issue of The New Yorker magazine and was reprinted in Show and Tell: New Yorker Profiles (The Overlook Press, 2000).

*A poet, novelist, and playwright, Langston Hughes was one of the major figures of the Harlem Renaissance. In the following passage from his autobiography, *The Big Sea*, Hughes describes how Harlem became a tourist destination for white New Yorkers during the 1920s.*

Notice how his predominately paratactic style (along with his reliance on series in paragraphs four and five) gives the writing a casual, conversational flavor. (For another perspective on Harlem in the 1920s, see "The Making of Harlem," by James Weldon Johnson.)



When the Negro Was in Vogue from *The Big Sea** by Langston Hughes

White people began to come to Harlem in droves. For several years they packed the expensive Cotton Club on Lenox Avenue. But I was never there, because the Cotton Club was a Jim Crow club for gangsters and monied whites. They were not cordial to Negro patronage, unless you were a celebrity like Bojangles. So Harlem Negroes did not like the Cotton Club and never appreciated its Jim Crow policy in the very heart of their dark community. Nor did ordinary Negroes like the growing influx of whites toward Harlem after sundown, flooding the little cabarets and bars where formerly only colored people laughed and sang, and where now the strangers were given the best ringside tables to sit and stare at the Negro customers--like amusing animals in a zoo.

The Negroes said: "We can't go downtown and sit and stare at you in your clubs. You won't even let us in your clubs." But they didn't say it out loud--for Negroes are practically never rude to white people. So thousands of whites came to Harlem night after night, thinking the Negroes loved to have them there, and firmly believing that all Harlemites left their houses at sundown to sing and dance in cabarets, because most of the whites saw nothing but the cabarets, not the houses.

Some of the owners of Harlem clubs, delighted at the flood of white patronage, made the grievous error of barring their own race, after the manner of the famous Cotton Club. But most of these quickly lost business and folded up, because they failed to realize that a large part of the Harlem attraction for downtown New Yorkers lay in simply watching the colored customers amuse themselves. And the smaller clubs, of course, had no big floor shows or a name band like the Cotton Club, where Duke Ellington usually held forth, so, without black patronage, they were not amusing at all.

Some of the small clubs, however, had people like Gladys Bentley, who was something worth discovering in those days, before she got famous, acquired an accompanist, specially written material, and conscious vulgarity. But for two or three amazing years, Miss Bentley sat, and played a big piano all night long, literally all night, without stopping--singing songs like "St. James Infirmary," from ten in the evening until dawn, with scarcely a break between the notes, sliding from one song to another, with a powerful and continuous under beat of jungle rhythm. Miss Bentley was an amazing exhibition of musical energy--a large, dark, masculine lady, whose feet pounded the floor while her fingers pounded the keyboard--a perfect piece of African sculpture, animated by her own rhythm...

But when the place where she played became too well known, she began to sing with an accompanist, became a star, moved to a larger place, then downtown, and is now in Hollywood. The old magic of the woman and the piano and the night and the rhythm being one is gone. But everything goes, one way or the other. The '20s are gone and lots of fine things in Harlem night life have disappeared like snow in the sun--since it became utterly commercial, planned for the downtown tourist trade, and therefore dull.

* *The Big Sea*, by Langston Hughes, was originally published by Knopf in 1940 and reprinted by Hill and Wang in 1993.

Born in St. Louis and then reared by her grandmother in the segregated community of Stamps, Arkansas, Maya Angelou overcame great adversities in her "roller-coaster life" to become a successful writer, dancer, singer, and African-American activist. The passages here have been drawn from Chapter 22 of the first volume of her autobiography, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings (1970).

In these paragraphs, Angelou recalls the first funeral that she attended as a child, that of Mrs. Florida Taylor, a neighbor who had left young Maya a "yellow brooch." The ritual that Angelou describes also marked the girl's first recognition of her own mortality.

from *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1970) by Maya Angelou



The mourners on the front benches sat in a blue-serge, black-crepe-dress gloom. A funeral hymn made its way around the church tediously but successfully. It eased into the heart of every gay thought, into the care of each happy memory. Shattering the light and hopeful: "On the other side of Jordan, there is a peace for the weary, there is a peace for me." The inevitable destination of all living things seemed but a short step away. I had never considered before that dying, death, dead, passed away, were words and phrases that might be even faintly connected with me.

But on that onerous day, oppressed beyond relief, my own mortality was borne in upon me on sluggish tides of doom.

No sooner had the mournful song run its course than the minister took to the altar and delivered a sermon that in my state gave little comfort. Its subject was, "Thou art my good and faithful servant with whom I am well pleased." His voice enweaved itself through the somber vapors left by the dirge. In a monotonous tone he warned the listeners that "this day might be your last," and the best insurance against dying a sinner was to "make yourself right with God" so that on the fateful day He would say, "Thou art my good and faithful servant with whom I am well pleased." . . .

Mr. Taylor and the high church officials were the first to file around the bier to wave farewell to the departed and get a glimpse of what lay in store for all men. Then on heavy feet, made more ponderous by the guilt of the living viewing the dead, the adult church marched up to the coffin and back to their seats. Their faces, which showed apprehension before reaching the coffin, revealed, on the way down the opposite aisle, a final confrontation of their fears. Watching them was a little like peeping through a window when the shade is not drawn flush. Although I didn't try, it was impossible not to record their roles in the drama.

And then a black-dressed usher stuck her hand out woodenly toward the children's rows. There was the shifty rustling of unreadiness but finally a boy of fourteen led us off and I dared not hang back, as much as I hated the idea of seeing Mrs. Taylor. Up the aisle, the moans and screams merged with the sickening smell of woolen black clothes worn in summer weather and green leaves wilting over yellow flowers. I couldn't distinguish whether I was smelling the clutching sound of misery or hearing the cloying odor of death.

It would have been easier to see her through the gauze, but instead I looked down on the stark face that seemed suddenly so empty and evil. It knew secrets that I never wanted to share.

The author of several essay collections and a regular contributor to the Chicago Public Radio program This American Life, David Sedaris has been described as "the most brilliantly witty New Yorker since Dorothy Parker." In this excerpt from his essay "Naked," an account of a week-long visit to a nudist colony, Sedaris describes his living quarters and the surrounding neighborhood.



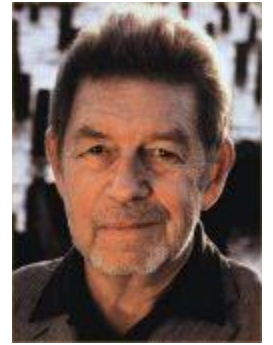
A Nudist Trailer Park from "Naked," by David Sedaris*

My trailer's main room is paneled with artificial walnut planks, and the low, fiberglass tiled ceiling is stained with water marks. A linoleum floor separates the kitchen area from the carpeted living room, which is furnished with a worn gold velvet sofa and two matching easy chairs that face a low table bearing the scuff marks of a now absent television set. Two of the walls are lined with windows, and the other supports a large, ornamental carpet picturing a family of polar bears occupying an ice flow. My bedroom, like that of my potential roommate's, is cell-like in both its size and simplicity, furnished with only a bed and a small chest of drawers that easily accommodates the little I brought with me.

By the time I'd unpacked and put away my groceries, it was early evening and the rain had stopped. After staring at the spot where the television used to be, I took a walk past the clubhouse and up into the park's more established neighborhoods. These were mobile homes that had been soundly grounded upon carefully manicured lots, many with built-on decks made of pine and redwood. Some of the trailers had been sided to resemble log cabins, and others were fronted by shingled, A-framed entrance halls. The homeowners' names were displayed on wooden plaques along with slogans such as "Bare with us" or "Smile if you talk naked!" Flowerbeds were marked with wooden cutouts of bare-bottomed pint-size children and silhouettes of shapely, naked women were painted onto the doors of tool sheds and nailed like FOR SALE signs onto the trees. Most everyone seemed to have a golf cart parked in the driveway, and these, too, were personalized with bumper stickers and hand-painted slogans. I passed a sign reading SHEEP CROSSING 20 FEET and came across a trailer whose lawn played host to a flock of artificial sheep tended to by an oversized, bonneted doll equipped with a crooked staff. Time had not been kind to the shepherdess, nor to her charges, whose waterlogged wool was stained with the evidence of a long and unforgiving winter. Farther along the road these homes gave way to tents and campers equipped with pop-up roofs and jury-rigged awnings made of plastic and fronted by mosquito netting. The lack of space had forced both the kitchens and bathrooms outdoors, and the yards were home to outhouses and picnic tables surrounded by coolers and grills that sat positioned beneath festive paper lanterns. A trailer door opened and a young woman stepped out, leading a child who beat upon her legs with a wooden spoon. The woman was topless, and her breasts hung like two kneesocks, each stuffed with a single orange. I knew when I signed up that I would encounter exposed breasts, but this being my first pair, I reacted with alarm. She wore her hair in a neglected shag and scolded the child for a moment or two before gathering him up in her arms and burying her sharp-featured face in his stomach. Topless. She was topless, walking the streets of what amounted to her neighborhood. The boy howled with pleasure and then rapped her over the head with his spoon.

Although he has published ten popular novels and two collections of short stories, Pete Hamill is probably best known as a (many would say the) great New York City newspaperman. He has served as editor-in-chief of both the New York Post and the Daily News, and has written columns for almost every major newspaper and magazine in the city.

In his memoir A Drinking Life (1994), Hamill re-creates everyday life in Brooklyn and Manhattan during the 1940s and '50s. This passage, set in the days immediately following the end of World War II, describes the rules and rituals of a once popular New York City street game.



Stickball in New York from A Drinking Life, by Pete Hamill*

In the streets, we still played the now forgotten games of the New York summers. Stickball was the supreme game, a kind of tabloid version of baseball, played with a broom handle as a bat and a pink rubber ball manufactured by the A. G. Spalding Co. In every street in New York, this ball was called a spaldeen. The spaldeens had vanished during the war and the game was played for awhile with hairy tennis balls, until even they had disappeared. But coming home from Fox Lair Camp, I felt a special excitement spreading through the neighborhood: Spaldeens are back! . . .

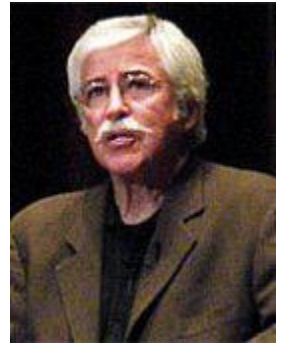
Stickball ruled us. On Saturday mornings, the older guys played big games against visitors from other neighborhoods or went off themselves to play beyond our frontiers. Money game! someone would shout, and suddenly we were all moving to the appointed court and the great noisy fiesta of the stickball morning. The players drank beer from cardboard containers on the sidelines and ate hero sandwiches and smoked cigarettes. They were cheered by neighbors, girlfriends, wives, and kids. And standing on the sidelines during those first games were the veterans, holding the spaldeens, bouncing them, smelling them in an almost sacramental way.

The men played on summer weekends; we kids played every day. There were still very few cars on the streets in that year after the war, so the "court" was always perfectly drawn, with sewer plates marking home and second base, while first and third were chalked against the curbs. The rules were settled before each game: one strike and you were out; off the factory wall or off a passing trolley car was a "hindoo"--which meant the play didn't count. The great hitters could hit the ball at least "three sewers," and it was said of Paulie McAleer of the Shamrock Boys that he once hit a ball an incredible five sewers. In memory, the games seem continuous and the days longer, richer, denser, and emptier than any others in my life. We did nothing and we did everything. You would wake, the radio playing, the rooms thick with the closed heat (and sometimes the sour smell of drink), grab something to eat--bread and butter covered with sugar, a piece of toast--and then race down the stairs, to burst into the streets. On a perfect Saturday in August, Twelfth Street would be wet from the water wagon, the air fresh, nobody else around, the tenements brooding in Edward Hopper light, and then a door would open and Billy Rossiter would appear with the bat and the spaldeen, and that was all we needed. We'd play off the factory walls until the others came down; we'd play ten hits a piece until there were enough players to choose up sides. And then we'd play until dark.

* Pete Hamill's A Drinking Life was published in 1994 by Little, Brown and Company.

Since its publication in 1982, Blue Highways has become a significant part of American travel literature. In the book, William Least Heat-Moon (the pen name of William Trogon) explores the country's backroads "in search of places where change did not mean ruin and where time and men and deeds connected."

In this passage from Chapter 14 of Blue Highways, Least Heat-Moon describes a cafe in Darlington, South Carolina. Note his reliance on detailed lists to convey a sense of place.



The Deluxe Cafe in Darlington from Blue Highways* by William Least Heat-Moon

Then Darlington, a town of portico and pediment, iron fences, big trees, and an old courthouse square that looked as though renovated by a German buzz bomb. But on the west side of the square stood the Deluxe Cafe. The times had left it be. The front window said AIR CONDITIONED in icy letters, above the door was neon, and inside hung an insurance agency calendar and another for an auto parts store. Also on the walls were the Gettysburg Address, Declaration of Independence, Pledge of Allegiance, a picture of a winged Jesus ushering along two kids who belonged in a Little Rascals film, and the obligatory waterfall lithograph. The clincher: small, white, hexagonal floor tiles. Two old men, carrying their arms folded behind, stopped to greet each other with a light, feminine touching of fingertips, a gesture showing the duration of their friendship. I went in happy.

I expected a grandmother, wiping her hands on a gingham apron, to come from the kitchen. Instead I got Brenda. Young, sullen, pink uniform, bottlecaps for eyes, handling her pad the way a cop does his citation book. The menu said all breakfasts came with grits, toast, and preserves. I ordered a breakfast of two eggs over easy. "Is that all you want?"

"Doesn't it come with grits and so forth?"

"Does if you ast fort."

"I want the complete, whole thing. Top to bottom."

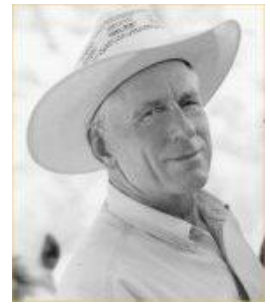
She snapped the pad closed. I waited. I read the rest of the menu, the Gettysburg Address, made a quick run over the Pledge of Allegiance, read about famous American women on four sugar packets, read a matchbook and the imprints on the flatware. I was counting grains of rice in the saltshaker (this was the South), when Brenda pushed a breakfast at me, the check slick with margarine and propped between slices of toast. The food was good and the sense of the place fine, but Brenda was destined for an interstate run-em-thru. Early in life she had developed the ability to make a customer wish he'd thrown up on himself rather than disturb her.

* Blue Highways: A Journey Into America by William Least Heat-Moon was published by Little, Brown and Company in 1982. The book is currently available in a paperback edition published by Back Bay Books (1999).

In this paragraph from the essay "Me and My Bike and Why," American novelist Thomas McGuane describes his first motorcycle.

Matchless 500 from "Me and My Bike and Why"* by Thomas McGuane

Unwatched, I can really examine the bike. Since I have no notion of how to operate it, it is purely an object. I think of a friend with a road racer on a simple mahogany block in front of his fireplace, except that he rides his very well. The bike was rather beautiful. I suppose it still is. (Are you out there? If you read this, get in touch care of this magazine. All is forgiven.) The designation, which now seems too cryptic for my taste, was "Matchless 500," and it was the motorcycle I believed I had thought up myself. It is a trifle hard to describe the thing to the uninitiated, but, briefly, it had a 500-cc., one-cylinder engine--a "big single" in the patois of bike freaks--and an eloquently simple maroon teardrop-shaped tank that is as much the identifying mark on a Matchless, often otherwise unrecognizable through modification, as the chevron of a redwing blackbird. The front wheel, delicate as a bicycle's, carried a Dunlop K70 tire (said to "cling") and had no fender; a single cable led to the pale machined brake drum. Over the knobby rear curved an extremely brief magnesium fender with, instead of the lush buddy-seat of the fat motorcycles, a minute pillion of leather. The impression was of performance and of complete disregard for comfort. The equivalent in automobiles would be, perhaps, the Morgan, in sailboats the Finn.



*Originally published in Sports Illustrated (Feb. 21, 1972) as "Finally, Just Me and My Bike," the essay "Me and My Bike and Why" was reprinted in the collection *An Outside Chance: Essays on Sport* by Thomas McGuane (Houghton Mifflin, 1980; revised 1990).

*Though more highly regarded for his themes of social conflict than for his prose style, American novelist Theodore Dreiser (1871-1945) had a reporter's eye for detail. In this paragraph from Chapter 15 of *The Genius*, Dreiser conveys a new arrival's feelings of excitement and isolation in early 20th-century Manhattan.*



from *The Genius** by Theodore Dreiser

He went about this early relationship to the city in the right spirit. For a little while he did not try to think what he would do, but struck out and walked here, there, and everywhere, this very first day down Broadway to the City Hall and up the Broadway from 14th to 42nd Street the same night. Soon he knew all Third Avenue and the Bowery, the wonders of Fifth Avenue and Riverside Drive, the beauties of the East River, the Battery, Central Park and the Lower East Side. He sought out quickly the wonders of metropolitan life--its crowds at dinner and theater time in Broadway, its tremendous throngs morning and afternoon in the shopping district, its amazing world of carriages in Fifth Avenue and Central Park. He had marveled at wealth and luxury in Chicago, but here it took his breath away. It was obviously so much more fixed, so definite and comprehensible. Here one felt instinctively the far reaches which separate the ordinary man from the scion of wealth. It curled him up like a frozen leaf, dulled his very soul, and gave him a clear sense of his position in the social scale. He had come here with a pretty high estimate of himself, but daily, as he looked, he felt himself crumbling. What was he? What was art? What did the city care? It was much more interested in other things, in dressing, eating, visiting, riding abroad. The lower part of the island was filled with cold commercialism which frightened him. In the upper half, which concerned only women and show--a voluptuous sybaritism--caused him envy. He had but two hundred dollars with which to fight his way, and this was the world he must conquer.

* The "Genius," by Theodore Dreiser, was first published by the John Lane Company in 1915, reprinted by Kessinger Publishing in 2004.

One of the most influential as well as controversial British journalists of his era, Bernard Levin was a columnist for The Times from 1971 until 1997. He was a devotee of H.L. Mencken, a fierce debater, an unashamed intellectual, and a masterful stylist. His greatest gift, said fellow journalist Alan Watkins, "was to overcome the inhibitions which the written word presents; get over a barrier; acquire freedom and even fly." Well known for composing unusually long sentences (as demonstrated in the passage below), he once wrote a 1,500-word column with only a single period.



In this excerpt from Enthusiasms (1983), a discourse on the pleasures of his life, Levin recalls a fortuitous encounter with failure in a woodworking class at boarding school.

From the Carpentry Shop to the Forge from Enthusiasms, by Bernard Levin

The woodwork teacher was a kindly soul. In what proved to be my last lesson in his class I was attempting to make a simple office filing-tray. I had cut one of the long sides, and it had turned out rather better than my usual efforts; or so it seemed to me, but in fact I had on that occasion surpassed myself in incompetence, for I had sawn the wood straight across the grain. When the teacher, making his rounds of the class, got to my bench he picked up the rectangle of wood and looked at it for a minute in silence, turning it this way and that in his hands, as if he could not believe the evidence of his eyes, as perhaps he really couldn't. Then he turned to me and, apparently in a spirit of genuine inquiry, asked, "Is this a joke?" I assured him it was not, realizing a moment later that it might have been better if I had insisted that it was.

He nodded gravely, then took the slab between finger and thumb at both ends, snapped it in half, threw it into the rubbish bin and bade me follow him to his dais at the end of the room, where he intimated to me, in the most courteous terms, that he doubted if I would ever make a success of carpentry, a conclusion I had already come to on my own behalf. I awaited news of my fate; I was not to know that what lay before me were perhaps a hundred of the happiest and most satisfying hours of my entire life; indeed so piercing was the happiness those hours gave me, that even now, as I conjure it up forty years later, I can feel it in all its power, and restrain the tears with difficulty.

In addition to a carpentry shop, the school had a forge; the passer-by would hear the roaring of the furnace and the bellows, the clang of iron, and see, whenever the door was opened, a Stygian gloom lit by the fires of hell. Or so memory portrays it, and certainly the decision to transfer me from the comparative safety of the woodwork class to the unimaginable perils of the forge struck me speechless with terror. But the forge was an alternative to carpentry; one or the other was obligatory, and the woodwork teacher doubtless felt that I could not be more hopeless with iron than I had shown myself to be with wood, and that at least he would be rid of me. The next week, I reported to the forge; an enveloping leather apron was draped over me, I was shown how to operate the mechanical bellows and the simpler tools, and given instruction in safety procedures. Then, under careful guidance (possibly the woodwork teacher had passed the word along to his colleague in the smithy), I heated a bar of metal red hot, laid it upon the anvil, and hammered it flat.

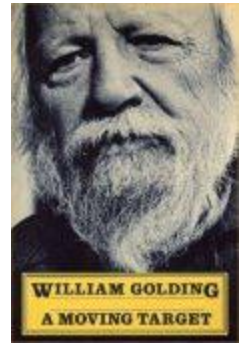
The most suitable way for this story to continue would be, I suppose, in the form of a revelation that I turned out to be a metal worker of genius, culminating in a shy confession that it was I who made the iron chandelier, forty feet in diameter and most elaborately chased, with a thousand fantastically decorated candleholders, which hangs to this day in the nave of East Grinstead Cathedral. It is not so; I was quite as hopeless with my hands in the forge as I had been at the carpenter's bench, and all I had to show at the end of all my hours among the sparks and the furnace, my efforts twixt hammer and anvil, was a toasting-fork of extremely irregular design. But I had stumbled upon one of the great, holy, all-consuming loves of my life: fire.

For additional specimens of Bernard Levin's prose, see Bernard Levin on Writers and Writing.

Enthusiasms by Bernard Levin was published in Great Britain in 1983 by Jonathan Cape Ltd.; it was published in the U.S. in 1984 by Crown Publishers.

Best known for his first novel (Lord of the Flies) and his final trilogy of allegorical sea tales (collectively known as To the Ends of the Earth), British novelist William Golding was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1983. He originally delivered this encomium to the book in a lecture in 1976--well before the arrival of laptops, Kindles, e-books, and other competitors to what Golding calls "physical books."

from "A Moving Target"* by William Golding (1911-1993)



What a piece of work is a book! I am not talking about writing or printing. I am talking about the codex we may leaf through, that may be put away on a shelf for whole centuries and will remain there, unchanged and handy. We are so accustomed to crediting books with personality you will forgive my excursion into the pathetic fallacy when I speak of books as lying to hand with the obedience and humility of all harmless and useful beings. Of course, in a large library or bookshop we may see hundreds of yards of books and mutter, "Good God--who would want ever to add to that lot?" But this is the reaction of surfeit. The book, the stack of conveniently arranged pages, is an invention, in its physical nature as near as anything can be to remaining beyond criticism. We have them so often before our eyes that we tend to forget the ingenuity concealed in their apparent simplicity. Our world is voracious and still becoming more so. Sooner or later, unless we exercise a care and forethought which is seldom evident in the mass of human beings, we shall be left with little more than village or small town economy. It is worth noting, therefore, that the making of books can be a cottage industry. If the need is there, anyone could learn that careful swirl of the tray and flick of the wrist that distributes the pulp evenly over the mesh and gives us handmade paper. Flax, leather, cotton, silk--the heart warms at the thought of them in our era of alloys and plastic. I say this because I sometimes hear people say that the age of the book is past; and I suppose these statements to come from people who have a couple of thousand television sets on their shelves. But it will be a very advanced village industry that can manufacture a television set. Tapes, cassettes, records, radios, television sets are with us, certainly; but he would be a wise man who could predict how long we shall be able to afford them. Nor have these objects beauty in themselves. I think of a book that I bought for a few pence, second-hand. It is the Odyssey, published in 1800. It is printed on handmade paper and in the most exquisite Greek fount of the early eighteenth century. I do not collect books for their rarity or beauty but I come across such books sometimes. That one is a delight not just to the eye and the intellect but to the hands, with its leather binding, still supple after more than a hundred and seventy years. A luckier friend bought for only a few pounds a book within a few years of being five hundred years old. I held it in my hands, opened it, and the immense words were there, still clearly to be read on the near-white page.

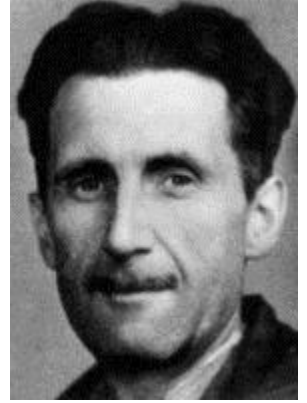
Would that the ship Argo had never sailed--

As long as we value the simple and the durable, the unobtrusively convenient, we shall make books available to us. For they will hold in perpetuity something as dull as a date or as proud as a poem. There lies, perhaps, some tedious record; or there will blaze out at us some passionate expression of the human spirit, not dulled or obscured by time, but clear as ever it was. As long as we are physical human beings with an inclination towards the acceptance of physical convenience and with a pleasure in touch and sight, there will be physical books.

*"A Moving Target" by William Golding was originally delivered as an address to Les Anglicistes, Rouen, France, on May 16, 1976. A slightly revised version of the lecture was included in the collection A Moving Target, published in 1982 by Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

From 1922 to 1927, journalist and novelist George Orwell served in Burma (now the Union of Myanmar) as a member of the Indian Imperial Police. Out of that experience came the narrative essay "A Hanging"--though it's unlikely that Orwell ever observed a hanging firsthand.

*In the following two paragraphs, which appear midway through "A Hanging," the narrator shifts his point of view from that of a disinterested observer to one who identifies intimately with the prisoner. In classical terms, this sort of identification is known as *ethopoeia*.*



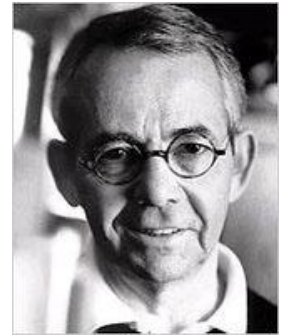
from "A Hanging" (1931) by George Orwell

It was about forty yards to the gallows. I watched the bare brown back of the prisoner marching in front of me. He walked clumsily with his bound arms, but quite steadily, with that bobbing gait of the Indian who never straightens his knees. At each step his muscles slid neatly into place, the lock of hair on his scalp danced up and down, his feet printed themselves on the wet gravel. And once, in spite of the men who gripped him by each shoulder, he stepped slightly aside to avoid a puddle on the path.

It is curious, but till that moment I had never realized what it means to destroy a healthy, conscious man. When I saw the prisoner step aside to avoid the puddle, I saw the mystery, the unspeakable wrongness, of cutting a life short when it is in full tide. This man was not dying, he was alive just as we were alive. All the organs of his body were working--bowels digesting food, skin renewing itself, nails growing, tissues forming--all toiling away in solemn foolery. His nails would still be growing when he stood on the drop, when he was falling through the air with a tenth of a second to live. His eyes saw the yellow gravel and the gray walls, and his brain still remembered, foresaw, reasoned--reasoned even about puddles. He and we were a party of men walking together, seeing, hearing, feeling, understanding the same world; and in two minutes, with a sudden snap, one of us would be gone--one mind less, one world less.

"A Hanging" by George Orwell was first published in *Adelphi*, August 1931. It was reprinted in 1950 in *Shooting an Elephant and Other Essays* (UK edition, Secker and Warburg; US edition, Harcourt Brace & Co.).

A renowned cultural critic and master of the familiar essay, Joseph Epstein was for many years the editor of The American Scholar magazine and a lecturer in writing at Northwestern University. In "You Take Manhattan" (published in The Middle of My Tether, 1983), he describes the "permanent transience" and "jumpy rhythms" of the city he called home for three years. In the following excerpt from that essay, Epstein employs a series of witty examples to illustrate the outsized attitudes and aspirations of New Yorkers.



from "You Take Manhattan"* by Joseph Epstein

There are eight million stories in the naked city, as an old television show used to announce, and, before coming to New York to work, I had heard very few of them. I worked on 15th Street, off Union Square, in a building that housed a number of union agents and the old Rand School Library. Hasidic Jews and elderly Mensheviks potted in and out of the building. In the library, men spent lifetimes getting up the material for books no one wanted to read. I met a jazz critic, a teacher of literature courses at the School of General Education at Columbia University, who referred to his job as "working the lounge at Columbia." More than half the people I came across were at work on a novel, or painted, or sang, or danced. A pants salesman in our apartment building gave up his line to take acting lessons. Accountants were sure to have been Trotskyists in their youth. The city sagged under the weight of aspiration. Yet all this aspiration gave New York an appealing aspect of hope and dreaminess.

The other side of this aspiration--a side that often puts off strangers--is the sheer appalling knowingness of New Yorkers. Delicatessen countermen offer stock-market tips. Cabdrivers are flush with opinions on everything. (Agnes Repplier tells how, many years ago, she once entered a New York cab and announced, "I want to go to Brooklyn." "You mean," the driver corrected her, "you have to.") Even the New York bums seem a bit sharper than their confreres in other cities. I was once stopped on Waverly Place by a youngish panhandler who asked if he could have all my change. Thrown off balance by the originality of his request, I forked over a dollar and twenty cents. But for simple knowingness, for being simultaneously with it, inside it, and yet above it all, I shall never forget a man who one day sat in the chair alongside mine in a New York barbershop. When the barber asked him if he was going to that Sunday's pro football game, he said he hated crowds, and besides they piped the game into his club. Stock market looked bad, the barber said. He had got out last month, the man replied. Supposed to have snowstorms next week, the barber said. He couldn't care less, the man replied; he was off to Florida on Monday. If you told this man that his eyeballs had just dropped out, doubtless he would have responded, no sweat, he had another pair in the car. Clearly, here was a man who, even in hell, would have an air-conditioned room reserved.

In no other city does life seem such a perpetual balancing of debits and credits, of evils and virtues, as it does in New York. No other city seems so charming yet so crude, so civilized yet so uncouth. I recall once going out with two friends to bring back Chinese food from a restaurant on upper Broadway. With the food in hand, we were stopped by a young Puerto Rican drugged to the hairline who wanted the wristwatch worn by one of my friends. We were able to joke him out of it, but the prospect was fraught with danger. Such, paradigmatically, is New York: the prospect of the delight of first-class Chinese food, the danger of having a knife pulled on you while getting it home.* Originally published in *The American Scholar*, "You Take Manhattan" was reprinted in *The Middle of My Tether: Familiar Essays*, by Joseph Epstein, W.W. Norton & Company, 1983.

American paleontologist Stephen Jay Gould was one of the most popular and highly regarded science writers of the late 20th century. All 300 of the monthly columns that he wrote for Natural History magazine were collected in books, and his numerous awards include the National Book Award (1981), the Distinguished Scientist Award (1997), Humanist of the Year (2001), and the Darwin-Wallace Medal (2008).

Gould was also a devoted baseball fan. In his essay "The Streak of Streaks" (first published in The New York Review of Books in 1988), he explored the significance of Joe Dimaggio's 56-game hitting streak in 1941, generally considered to be "the greatest accomplishment in the history of baseball, if not all modern sport." In the follow excerpt from that essay, Gould relies on examples and statistics to explain--and debunk--the popular belief known as "hot hands," a version of the gambler's fallacy.



Hot Hands – From "The Streak of Streaks"* by Stephen Jay Gould

Start with a phenomenon that nearly everyone both accepts and considers well understood--"hot hands" in basketball. Now and then, someone just gets hot, and can't be stopped. Basket after basket falls in--or out as with "cold hands," when a man can't buy a bucket for love or money (choose your cliché). The reason for this phenomenon is clear enough; it lies embodied in the maxim: "When you're hot, you're hot; and when you're not, you're not." You get that touch, build confidence; all nervousness fades, you find your rhythm; swish, swish, swish. Or you miss a few, get rattled, endure the booing, experience despair; hands start shaking and you realize that you shoulda stood in bed.

Everybody knows about hot hands. The only problem is that no such phenomenon exists. The Stanford psychologist Amos Tversky studied every basket made by the Philadelphia 76ers for more than a season. He found, first of all, that probabilities of making a second basket did not rise following a successful shot. Moreover, the number of "runs," or baskets in succession, was no greater than what a standard random, or coin-tossing, model would predict. (If the chance of making each basket is 0.5, for example, a reasonable value for good shooters, five hits in a row will occur, on average, once in thirty-two sequences--just as you can expect to toss five successive heads about once in thirty-two times, or 0.5.)

Of course Larry Bird, the great forward of the Boston Celtics, will have more sequences of five than Joe Airball--but not because he has greater will or gets in that magic rhythm more often. Larry has longer runs because his average success rate is so much higher, and random models predict more frequent and longer sequences. If Larry shoots field goals at 0.6 probability of success, he will get five in a row about once every thirteen sequences (0.65). If Joe, by contrast, shoots only 0.3, he will get his five straight only about once in 412 times. In other words, we need no special explanation for the apparent pattern of long runs. There is no ineffable "causality of circumstance" (if I may call it that), no definite reason born of the particulars that make for heroic myths--courage in the clinch, strength in adversity, etc. You only have to know a person's ordinary play in order to predict his sequences. (I rather suspect that we are convinced of the contrary not only because we need myths so badly, but also because we remember the successes and simply allow the failures to fade from memory.)

*Stephen Jay Gould's "The Streak of Streaks" (a review of *Streak: Joe DiMaggio and the Summer of '41* by Michael Seidel) first appeared in *The New York Review of Books*, Aug. 18, 1988. The essay was reprinted in Gould's collection *Bully for Brontosaurus: Reflections In Natural History* (Norton, 1991).

In Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War (1997), American author Barbara Ehrenreich analyzes the psychology of war and of warriors. In this passage from the opening chapter, she explains why the ritualistic experience of boot camp is a psychological necessity for new soldiers.



from Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War* by Barbara Ehrenreich

. . . So if there is a destructive instinct that impels men to war, it is a weak one and often requires a great deal of help.

In seventeenth-century Europe, the transformation of man into soldier took on a new form, more concerted and disciplined, and far less pleasant, than wine. New recruits and even seasoned veterans were endlessly drilled, hour after hour, until each man began to feel himself part of a single, giant fighting machine. The drill was only partially inspired by the technology of firearms. It's easy enough to teach a man to shoot a gun; the problem is to make him willing to get into situations where guns are being shot and to remain there long enough to do some shooting of his own. So modern military training aims at a transformation parallel to that achieved by "primitives" with war drums and paint: In the fanatical routines of boot camp, a man leaves behind his former identity and is reborn as a creature of the military--an automaton and also, ideally, a willing killer of other men.

This is not to suggest that killing is foreign to human nature or, more narrowly, to the male personality. Men (and women) have again and again proved themselves capable of killing impulsively and with gusto. But there is a huge difference between a war and an ordinary fight. War not only departs from the normal; it inverts all that is moral and right: In war one should kill, should steal, should burn cities and farms, should perhaps even rape matrons and little girls. Whether or not such activities are "natural" or at some level instinctual, most men undertake them only by entering what appears to be an "altered state"--induced by drugs or lengthy drilling, and denoted by face paint or khakis.

* From Chapter One, "The Ecstasy of War," in Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War, by Barbara Ehrenreich, published by Henry Holt and Company in 1997.

Carol Bly was an award-winning author of essays, short stories, and two nonfiction works on writing. Tobias Wolff has said that her stories possess "a tremendous moral rigor . . . even a moral ferocity."

*In "Getting Tired," an essay in the book *A Letter from the Country*, the Minnesota author begins by describing a John Deere 6600 combine, which leads to reflections on the nature of modern farm work. In the following excerpt from that essay, Bly offers an extended definition of "monkeying" from a distinctly rural point of view.*



from "Getting Tired"* by Carol Bly (1930-2007)

The value of the 66 is that it can do anything, and to change it from a combine to a cornpicker takes one man about half an hour, whereas most machine conversions on farms take several men a half day. It frees its owner from a lot of monkeying.

Monkeying, in city life, is what little boys do to clocks so they never run again. In farming it has two quite different meanings. The first is small side projects. You monkey with poultry, unless you're a major egg handler. Or you monkey with ducks or geese. If you have a very small milk herd, and finally decide that prices plus state regulations don't make your few Holsteins worthwhile, you "quit monkeying with them." There is a hidden dignity in this word: it precludes mention of money. It lets the wife of a very marginal farmer have a conversation with a woman who may be helping her husband run fifteen hundred acres. "How you coming with those geese?" "Oh, we've been real disgusted. We're thinking of quitting monkeying with them." It saves her having to say, "We lost our shirts on those darn geese."

The other meaning of monkeying is wrestling with and maintaining machinery, such as changing heads from combining to cornpicking. Farmers who cornpick the old way, in which the corn isn't shelled automatically during picking in the field but must be elevated to the top of a pile by belt and then shelled, put up with some monkeying.

* Carol Bly's "Getting Tired" originally appeared in her monthly column, "A Letter from the Country," in the Minnesota Public Radio Magazine. It was later published in *Letters from the Country* (Harper & Row, 1981, reprinted by the University of Minnesota Press in 1999).

A highly regarded art critic, novelist, poet, essayist, and screenwriter, John Berger began his career as a painter in London. Among his best known works are Ways of Seeing (1972), a series of essays about the power of visual images, and G. (also 1972), an experimental novel which was awarded both the Booker Prize and the James Tait Black Memorial Prize for fiction.

In this passage from And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos (1984), Berger draws on the writings of Mircea Eliade, a Romanian-born historian of religion, to offer an extended definition of home.



The Meaning of Home* by John Berger

The term home (Old Norse Heimer, High German heim, Greek komi, meaning "village") has, since a long time, been taken over by two kinds of moralists, both dear to those who wield power. The notion of home became the keystone for a code of domestic morality, safeguarding the property (which included the women) of the family. Simultaneously the notion of homeland supplied a first article of faith for patriotism, persuading men to die in wars which often served no other interest except that of a minority of their ruling class. Both usages have hidden the original meaning.

Originally home meant the center of the world--not in a geographical, but in an ontological sense. Mircea Eliade has demonstrated how home was the place from which the world could be founded. A home was established, as he says, "at the heart of the real." In traditional societies, everything that made sense of the world was real; the surrounding chaos existed and was threatening, but it was threatening because it was unreal. Without a home at the center of the real, one was not only shelterless, but also lost in nonbeing, in unreality. Without a home everything was fragmentation.

Home was the center of the world because it was the place where a vertical line crossed with a horizontal one. The vertical line was a path leading upwards to the sky and downwards to the underworld. The horizontal line represented the traffic of the world, all the possible roads leading across the earth to other places. Thus, at home, one was nearest to the gods in the sky and to the dead of the underworld. This nearness promised access to both. And at the same time, one was at the starting point and, hopefully, the returning point of all terrestrial journeys.

* Originally published in *And Our Faces, My Heart, Brief as Photos*, by John Berger (Pantheon Books, 1984).

From the 1940s to the 1980s, Sydney J. Harris wrote a daily column, titled "Strictly Personal," that was syndicated in hundreds of newspapers throughout the United States. Described as "America's finest living aphorist" and "the most cosmic journalist we possess," Harris wrote thought-provoking personal essays on various aspects of contemporary life.

In this brief essay, first published in 1961, Harris offers an extended definition of a familiar character type.



A Jerk* by Sidney J. Harris

I don't know whether history repeats itself, but biography certainly does. The other day, Michael came in and asked me what a "jerk" was--the same question Carolyn put to me a dozen years ago.

At that time, I fluffed her off with some inane answer, such as, "A jerk isn't a very nice person," but both of us knew it was an unsatisfactory reply. When she went to bed, I began trying to work up a suitable definition.

It is a marvelously apt word, of course. Until it was coined, there was really no single word in English to describe the kind of person who is a jerk--"boob" and "simp" were too old hat, and besides they really didn't fit, for they could be lovable, and a jerk never is.

Thinking it over, I decided that a jerk is basically a person without insight. He is not necessarily a fool or a dope, because some extremely clever persons can be jerks. In fact, it has little to do with intelligence as we commonly think of it; it is, rather, a kind of subtle but persuasive aroma emanating from the inner part of the personality.

I know a college president who can be described only as a jerk. He is not an unintelligent man, nor unlearned, nor even unschooled in the social amenities. Yet he is a jerk cum laude, because of a fatal flaw in his nature--he is totally incapable of looking into the mirror of his soul and shuddering at what he sees there.

A jerk, then, is a man (or woman) who is utterly unable to see himself as he appears to others. He has no grace, he is tactless without meaning to be, he is a bore even to his best friends, he is an egotist without charm. All of us are egotists to some extent, but most of us--unlike the jerk--are perfectly and horribly aware of it when we make asses of ourselves. The jerk never knows.

* "A Jerk" by Sydney J. Harris was published in *Last Things First*, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961.

A staff writer for The New Yorker magazine since 1992, Susan Orlean has published several works of nonfiction, including The Orchid (1999), The Bullfighter Checks Her Makeup (2002), and My Kind of Place: Travel Stories from a Woman Who's Been Everywhere (2004). The paragraphs that follow have been drawn from one of these travel stories, "Super-Duper," which originally appeared in The New Yorker in 1995.

Orlean's writing style has been variously described as "crisp [and] elegant," "snapshot-vivid," and "disarming but disciplined." Here she introduces specific examples to support her thesis that "the real contest at the Super Bowl" is not the game itself but the metaphorical battles leading up to it.

from "Super-Duper" by Susan Orlean

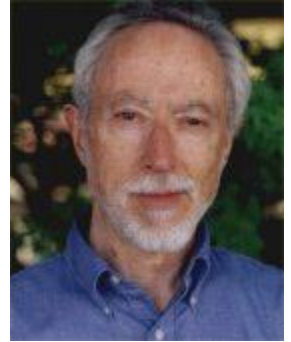
If football is a metaphor for war, then Super Bowl week is a metaphor for football. Throughout the week, everything had a sort of battlefield urgency and martial precision. Posted at the Media Center: "Following is a press release regarding the Super Bowl Sod. It is from Bermuda Dunes (near Palm Springs), California, not Las Vegas. . . . It is very important for it to be known that the sod is from Palm Springs . . . and not Las Vegas, as has previously been reported." Over the PA at an outdoor souvenir fair: "Attention, personnel! We need mini-helmets at the autograph booth! Mini-helmets! ASAP!" At the Commissioners' Party, an enormous gala at the Miami Beach Convention Center, the league owners were penned in a corner apart from the crowd and were guarded by wiry tough guys with walkie talkies. One tough guy had collared a small, tan man with luminous white hair who was headed into the pen. "Station to command base," the guard said into his walkie-talkie. "I have a certain individual here asserting he is one of the owners of the Seattle Seahawks. Can you clear me?" He was, and they did.

The Super Bowl is billed as the ultimate American sporting event and the ultimate athletic battle: No other television broadcast attracts a larger audience, and the money and effort that people spend to attend it is stupendous. But during my week in Miami, I didn't feel that it was on the brink of a singular decisive battle: I felt that I was bouncing from one little skirmish to another--the mini-helmet crisis, the heavy-duty credentials checkpoints at the parties, the elbowing through crowds to get near one of the players, the press briefings about which Charger had a case of the gout and whether the 49ers practiced in full pads or just in sweatclothes. Very few Super Bowls ever turn out to be exciting games. This is blamed, variously, on the misalignment in the two football conferences, which means the matchup always has one clearly superior team; on the fact that you can never guarantee that any single game in any sport will be suspenseful (as opposed to a playoff series, which builds momentum); or on the simple fact that nothing, no matter how thrilling, could ever live up to the hype that precedes every Super Bowl. Still, everyone runs around all week in a state of high excitation. There is a real contest at the Super Bowl, but it's not on the field--it's a battle for tickets and hotel rooms and invitations and autographs and access and souvenirs, and it requires both an offensive and a defensive strategy.

Originally published in The New Yorker (February 13, 1995), "Super-Duper" appears in Susan Orlean's collection My Kind of Place: Travel Stories from a Woman Who's Been Everywhere (Random House, 2004).

A recipient of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2003, South African novelist and critic J.M. Coetzee has been described as a bleak writer but not a pessimistic one.

Set in apartheid-era South Africa, his novel Age of Iron is in the form of a letter from Mrs. Curren, a retired classics lecturer dying of cancer, to her daughter in the U.S. In this excerpt from Chapter One, Curren reflects fiercely and bitterly on the rulers she loathes. Her metaphorical invective is artfully fragmented as she searches for meaning in the dead language of Latin.



The Reign of the Locust from Chapter One of Age of Iron by J.M. Coetzee*

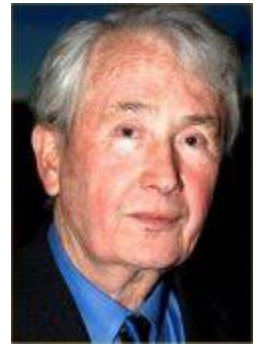
Television. Why do I watch it? The parade of politicians every evening: I have only to see the heavy, blank faces so familiar since childhood to feel gloom and nausea. The bullies in the last row of school desks, raw-boned, lumpish boys, grown up now and promoted to rule the land. They with their fathers and mothers, their aunts and uncles, their brothers and sisters: a locust horde, a plague of black locusts infesting the country, munching without cease, devouring lives. Why, in a spirit of horror and loathing, do I watch them? Why do I let them into the house? Because the reign of the locust family is the truth of South Africa, and the truth is what makes me sick? Legitimacy they no longer trouble to claim. Reason they have shrugged off. What absorbs them is power and the stupor of power. Eating and talking, munching lives, belching. Slow, heavy-bellied talk. Sitting in a circle, debating ponderously, issuing degrees like hammer blows: death, death, death. Untroubled by the stench. Heavy eyelids, piggish eyes, shrewd with the shrewdness of generations of peasants. Plotting against each other too: slow peasant plots that take decades to mature. The new Africans, pot-bellied, heavy-jowled men on their stools of office: Cetshwayo, Dingane in white skins. Pressing downward: their power in their weight. Huge bull testicles pressing down on their wives, their children, pressing the spark out of them. In their own hearts no spark of fire left. Sluggish hearts, heavy as blood pudding.

And their message stupidly unchanging, stupidly forever the same. Their feat, after years of etymological meditation on the word, to have raised stupidity to a virtue. To stupefy: to deprive of feeling; to benumb, deaden; to stun with amazement. Stupor: insensibility, apathy, torpor of mind. Stupid: dulled in the faculties, indifferent, destitute of thought or feeling. From stupere, to be stunned, astounded. A gradient from stupid to stunned to astonished, to be turned to stone. The message: that the message never changes. A message that turns people to stone.

* J.M. Coetzee's novel Age of Iron was first published by Random House in 1990. It is currently available in a paperback edition published by Penguin (1998).

"Worse than the ordinary miserable childhood," says Frank McCourt at the beginning of Angela's Ashes, "is the miserable Irish childhood, and worse yet is the miserable Irish Catholic childhood." Narrated in the historical present tense, McCourt's memoir provides a lyrical and painful account of growing up in Limerick, Ireland.

In the following passage from chapter three of Angela's Ashes, Frank and his younger brother Malachy return home to find that that their parents have been forced to move upstairs to "Italy."



from Angela's Ashes* by Frank McCourt

Two weeks before Christmas Malachy and I come home from school in a heavy rain and when we push in the door we find the kitchen empty. The table and chairs and trunk are gone and the fire is dead in the grate. The Pope is still there and that means we haven't moved again. Dad would never move without the Pope. The kitchen floor is wet, little pools of water all around, and the walls are twinkling with the damp. There's a noise upstairs and when we go up we find Dad and Mam and the missing furniture. It's nice and warm there with a fire blazing in the grate, Mam sitting in the bed, and Dad reading The Irish Press and smoking a cigarette by the fire. Mam tells us there was a terrible flood, that the rain came down the lane and poured in under our door. They tried to stop it with rags but they only turned sopping wet and let the rain in. People emptying their buckets made it worse and there was a sickening stink in the kitchen. She thinks we should stay upstairs as long as there is rain. We'll be warm through the winter months and then we can go downstairs in the springtime if there is any sign of dryness in the walls or the floor. Dad says it's like going away on our holidays to a warm foreign place like Italy. That's what we'll call the upstairs from now on, Italy. Malachy says the Pope is still on the wall downstairs and he's going to be all cold and couldn't we bring him up? but Mam says, No, he's going to stay where he is because I don't want him on the wall glaring at me in the bed. Isn't it enough that we dragged him all the way from Brooklyn to Belfast to Dublin to Limerick? All I want now is a little peace, ease and comfort.

* Angela's Ashes by Frank McCourt was published by Scribner in 1996. It is available in the U.K. in a HarperPerennial paperback (2005).

Hyperbole, circumlocution, inflated diction, and abstruse allusions are just a few of the characteristics of S.J. Perelman's comic prose style. In these opening paragraphs from an essay on the animate and articulate groceries in his icebox, Perelman exuberantly illustrates Erasmus's definition of copia: "a magnificent and impressive thing, surging along like a golden river, with thoughts and words pouring out in rich abundance."



from "I Am Not Now, Nor Have I Ever Been, a Matrix of Lean Meat" by S. J. Perelman

I awoke with a violent, shuddering start, so abruptly that I felt the sudden ache behind the eyeballs one experiences after bolting an ice-cream soda or ascending too recklessly from the ocean floor. The house was utterly still; except for the tumult of the creek in the pasture, swollen with melting snow, a silence as melting snow, a silence as awesome as that of Fatehpur Sikri, the abandoned citadel of the Moguls, shrouded the farm. Almost instantly, I was filled with an immense inquietude, an anxiety of such proportions that I quailed. The radium dial of the alarm clock read two-thirty: the exact moment, I realized with a tremor, that I had become involved the night before in the affair of the Boneless Veal Steaks. The Boneless Veal Steaks--it had the same prosaic yet grisly implications as the Five Orange Pips or the Adventure of the Engineer's Thumb. Propped up on one elbow and staring into the velvet dark, I reviewed as coherently as I could the events of the preceding night.

I had awakened around two and, after thrashing about in my kip like a dying tautog, had lit and smoked the cork tip of a cigarette until I was nauseated. I thereupon woke up my wife, who apparently thought she could shirk her responsibilities by sleeping, and filed a brief resume of the disasters--financial, political, and emotional--threatening us. When she began upbraiding me, in the altogether illogical way women do, I did not succumb to justifiable anger but pacifically withdrew to the kitchen for a snack. As I was extricating a turkey wing from the tangle of leftovers in the icebox (amazing how badly the average housewife organizes her realm; no man would tolerate such inefficiency in business), my attention was drawn by a limp package labeled "Gilbert's Frozen Boneless Veal Steaks." Stapled to the exterior was a printed appeal that had the lugubrious intimacy of a Freudian case history, "Dear chef," it said. "I've lost my character. I used to have sinews, then I met a butcher at Gilbert's. He robbed me of my powers of resistance by cutting out some of the things that hold me together. I am a matrix of lean meat with my trimmings ground and worked back into me. Please be kind. Pick me up with a pancake turner or a spatula, don't grab me by the edges with a fork. Because of all I've been through I'm more fragile than others you've known. Please be gentle lest you tear me apart. Tillie the Tender."

The revelation that food had become articulate at long last, that henceforth I was changed from consumer to father confessor, so unmanned me that I let go the turkey wing; with a loud "Mrkgnao" she obviously had learned from reading Ulysses, the cat straightaway pounced on it. I must have been in a real stupor, because I just stood there gawking at her, my brain in a turmoil. What floored me, actually, wasn't that the veal had found a way to communicate--a more or less inevitable development, once you accepted the basic premise of Elsie, the Borden cow--but rather its smarmy and masochistic pitch. Here, for the first time in human experience, a supposedly inanimate object, a cutlet, had broken through the barrier and revealed itself as a creature with feelings and desires. Did it signalize its liberation with ecstasy, cry out some exultant word of deliverance, or even underplay it with a quiet request like "Mr. Watson, come here. I want you"? No; the whole message reeked of self-pity, of invalidism, of humbug. It was a sniveling eunuchoid plea for special privilege, a milepost of Pecksniffery. It was disgusting.

S.J. Perelman's "I Am Not Now, Nor Have I Ever Been, a Matrix of Lean Meat," originally published in *The New Yorker*, appears in the collection *The Most of S.J. Perelman* (Methuen, 2001).

Described as "equal parts incisive observer and eighth-grade class clown," Dave Barry wrote a nationally syndicated column for The Miami Herald from 1983 to 2005. "Thanks to my solid academic training," he once wrote, "today I can write hundreds of words on virtually any topic without possessing a shred of information, which is how I got a good job in journalism."

A master of hyperbole, Barry often insists that he is "not making this up." As you read the following excerpts from a column composed in the mid-1980s, decide for yourself whether Barry may still be telling the truth even when he is making things up.



from "Revenge of the Pork Person"* by Dave Barry

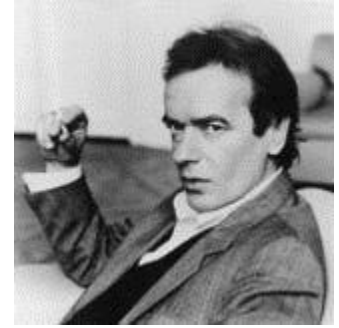
I have never met a woman, no matter how attractive, who wasn't convinced, deep down inside, that she was a real woofier. Men tend to be just the opposite. A man can have a belly you could house commercial aircraft in and a grand total of eight greasy strands of hair, which he grows real long and combs across the top of his head so that he looks, when viewed from above, like an egg in the grasp of a giant spider, plus this man can have B.O. to the point where he interferes with radio transmissions, and he will still be convinced that, in terms of attractiveness, he is borderline Don Johnson.

But not women. Women who look perfectly fine to other people are always seeing horrific physical flaws in themselves. I have this friend, Janice, who looks very nice and is a highly competent professional with a good job and a fine family, yet every now and then she will get very depressed, and do you want to know why? Because she thinks she has puffy ankles. This worries her much more often than, for example, the arms race. Her image of herself is that when she walks down the street, people whisper: "There she goes! The woman with the puffy ankles!" . . .

What women think they should look like, of course, is the models in fashion advertisements. This is pretty comical, because when we talk about fashion models, we are talking about mutated women, the results of cruel genetic experiments performed by fashion designers so lacking in any sense of human decency that they think nothing of putting their initials on your eyeglass lenses. These experiments have resulted in a breed of fashion models who are 8 and sometimes 10 feet tall, yet who weigh no more than an abridged dictionary due to the fact that they have virtually none of the bodily features we normally associate with females such as hips and (let's come right out and say it) bosoms. The leading cause of death among fashion models is falling through street grates. If a normal human woman puts on clothing designed for these unfortunate people, she is quite naturally going to look like Revenge of the Pork Person.

* First published in The Miami Herald, "Revenge of the Pork Person" is included in Dave Barry's Greatest Hits, Ballantine Books, 1988.

The narrator of Martin Amis's novel Money is John Self, a larger-than-life filmmaker whose gargantuan appetites are matched by the author's hyperbolic prose style. Note the effects created by tricolons and crots in these two paragraphs from the novel.



from Money* (1984) by Martin Amis

In LA, you can't do anything unless you drive. Now I can't do anything unless I drink. And the drink-drive combination, it really isn't possible out there. If you so much as loosen your seatbelt or drop you ashes or pick your nose, then it's an Alcatraz autopsy with the questions asked later. Any indiscipline, you feel, any variation, and there's a bullhorn, a set of scope sights, and a coptered pig drawing a bead on your rug.

So what can a poor boy do? You come out of the hotel, the Vraimont. Over boiling Watts the downtown sky line carries a smear of God's green snot. You walk left, you walk right, you are a bank rat on a busy river. This restaurant serves no drink, this one serves no meat, this one serves no heterosexuals. You can get your chimp shampooed, you can get your dick tattooed, twenty-four hours, but can you get lunch? And should you see a sign on the far side of the street flashing BEEF--BOOZE--NO STRINGS, then you can forget it. The only way to get across the road is to be born there. All the ped-xing signs say DON'T WALK, all of them, all the time. That is the message, the content of Los Angeles: don't walk. Stay inside. Don't walk. Drive. Don't walk. Run! I tried the cabs. No use. The cabbies are all Saturnians who aren't even sure whether this is a right planet or a left planet. The first thing you have to do, every trip, is teach them how to drive.

James Baldwin (1924-1987) was one of the major American novelists and essayists of the mid-twentieth century. In his three major collections of nonfiction, says Phillip Lopate, Baldwin "perfected a unique style of maximum tension which yoked together two opposites, tenderness and ferocity." In this excerpt from the autobiographical essay "Notes of a Native Son," Baldwin employs hypotactic structures to rank, order, and build his observations from evidence to conclusion



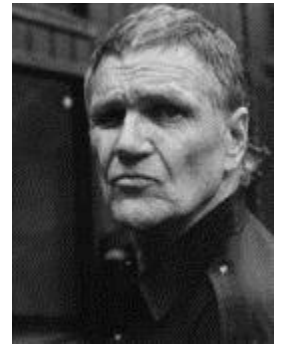
from "Notes of a Native Son"* (1955) - by James Baldwin

The only white people who came to our house were welfare workers and bill collectors. It was almost always my mother who dealt with them, for my father's temper, which was at the mercy of his pride, was never to be trusted. It was clear that he felt their very presence in his home to be a violation: this was conveyed by his carriage, almost ludicrously stiff, and by his voice, harsh and vindictively polite. When I was around nine or ten I wrote a play which was directed by a young, white schoolteacher, a woman, who then took an interest in me, and gave me books to read, and, in order to corroborate my theatrical bent, decided to take me to see what she somewhat tactlessly referred to as "real" plays. Theater-going was forbidden in our house, but, with the really cruel intuitiveness of a child, I suspected that the color of this woman's skin would carry the day for me. When, at school, she suggested taking me to the theater, I did not, as I might have done if she had been a Negro, find a way of discouraging her, but she agreed that she should pick me up at my house one evening. I then, very cleverly, left all the rest to my mother, who suggested to my father, as I knew she would, that it would not be very nice to let such a kind woman make the trip for nothing. Also, since it was a schoolteacher, I imagine that my mother countered with the idea of sin with the idea of "education," which word, even with my father, carried a kind of bitter weight.

Before the teacher came my father took me aside to ask why she was coming, what interest she could possibly have in our house, in a boy like me. I said I didn't know but I, too, suggested that it had something to do with education. And I understood that my father was waiting for me to say something--I didn't quite know what; perhaps that I wanted his protection against this teacher and her "education." I said none of these things and the teacher came and we went out. It was clear, during the brief interview in our living room, that my father was agreeing very much against his will and that he would have refused permission if he had dared. The fact that he did not dare caused me to despise him: I had no way knowing that he was facing in that living room a wholly unprecedented and frightening situation.

Later, when my father had been laid off from his job, this woman became very important to us. She was really a very sweet and generous woman and went to a great deal of trouble to be of help to us, particularly during one awful winter. My mother called her by the highest name she knew: she said she was a "christian." My father could scarcely disagree but during the four or five years of our relatively close association he never trusted her and was always trying to surprise in her open, Midwestern face the genuine, cunningly hidden, and hideous motivation. In later years, particularly when it began to be clear that this "education" of mine was going to lead me to perdition, he became more explicit and warned me that my white friends in high school were not really my friends and that I would see, when I was older, how white people would do anything to keep a Negro down. Some of them could be nice, he admitted, but none of them were to be trusted and most of them were not even nice. The best thing was to have as little to do with them as possible. I did not feel this way and I was certain, in my innocence, that I never would.

American novelist and essayist Harry Crews may be best known for his memoir A Childhood: The Biography of a Place, an affectionate and sometimes painful account of life in rural Georgia among the very poor. In this excerpt from the opening chapter of that book, Crews recounts his earliest impressions of his stepfather, who is eventually revealed to be a violent and dangerous drunk.



from *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place** by Harry Crews

I went into the long, dim, cool hallway that ran down the center of the house. Briefly I stopped at the bedroom where my parents slept and looked in at the neatly made bed and all the parts of the room, clean, with everything where it was supposed to be, just the way mama always kept it. And I thought of daddy, as I so often did because I loved him so much. If he was sitting down, I was usually in his lap. If he was standing up, I was usually holding his hand. He always said soft funny things to me and told me stories that never had an end but always continued when we met again.

He was tall and lean with flat high cheekbones and deep eyes and black thick hair which he combed straight back on his head. And under the eye on his left cheek was the scarred print of a perfect set of teeth. I knew he had taken the scar in a fight, but I never asked him about it and the teeth marks in his cheek only made him seem more powerful and stronger and special to me.

He shaved every morning at the water shelf on the back porch with a straight razor and always smelled of soap and whiskey. I knew mama did not like the whiskey, but to me it smelled sweet, better even than the soap. And I could never understand why she resisted it so, complained of it so, and kept telling him over and over again that he would kill himself and ruin everything if he continued with the whiskey. I did not understand about killing himself and I did not understand about ruining everything, but I knew the whiskey somehow caused the shouting and screaming and the ugly sound of breaking things in the night. The stronger the smell of whiskey on him, the kinder and gentler he was with me and my brother.

* *A Childhood: The Biography of a Place*, by Harry Crews, was published in 1978 by Harper & Row. In 1995 it was reprinted (with illustrations by Michael McCurdy) by University of Georgia Press.

Singer, songwriter, and politician Richard S. "Kinky" Friedman is also the author of a series of detective novels featuring a wise-cracking detective named, coincidentally, Kinky Friedman. In these two paragraphs from Armadillos and Old Lace, Friedman indulges in an interior monologue (that is, he talks to himself) "on the subject of loners." Consider how contractions and slang contribute to the colloquial tone of the passage.



from Armadillos and Old Lace* by Kinky Friedman

I leaned the shotgun up against the wall, poured another cup of coffee, and lit up a cigar. I sat down in the sunlit doorway of the trailer and sipped the coffee, smoked the cigar, and reflected upon the subject of loners in this world. There've been some very good loners down through the ages. Henry David Thoreau, Emily Dickinson, Johnny Appleseed, the woman who worked with gorillas in Africa whatever the hell her name was, even Benny Hill in the last years of his life after they canceled his television show. These people all knew that the majority is always wrong, and even if it isn't, who gives a damn anyway. They knew that within is where it's at, and if nothing's happening within it doesn't really matter if your co-dependent wife throws a black-tie surprise birthday party for you and hundreds of well-wishers show up who would just as soon wish you'd fallen down a well.

I liked loners. The downside, of course, was that every serial killer who'd ever lived had also been a loner. Well, you can't have everything. People just tend to drive you crazy after a while. That's why penthouses, nunneries, sailboats, islands, and jail cells do such a booming business. And trailers.

* Kinky Friedman's Armadillos and Old Lace was published by Simon & Schuster in 1994.

*In these two paragraphs from her memoir *Minor Characters*, novelist Joyce Johnson offers a concise sketch of life in New York's Lower East Side at the height of the Beat Movement in the 1950s. Consider how Johnson relies on lists (or series) to organize the many cultural images and references in each paragraph.*

from *Minor Characters: A Beat Memoir** by Joyce Johnson

Scuffling was what you did in my new neighborhood, soon to be called the East Village. The original poor of the Lower East Side had scuffled without hope, of course, selling their labor for low wages. Their children grew up and fled to Queens or Jersey, leaving room in the tenements for middle-class children loosely defined as "artists," who believed for a while, under the influence of all the new philosophy and rejecting the values of their own parents, that they had no use for money. Nomads without rucksacks, they joyfully camped out among the gloomy Ukrainians, the suspicious Poles, the Italian fruit vendors, the retired Jewish garment workers dying in their fourth-floor walkups. The newcomers to the neighborhood regarded jobs the way jazz musicians regarded gigs--brief engagements. A steady gig (really a contradiction in terms) was valued chiefly as a means of getting unemployment insurance. The great accomplishment was to avoid actual employment for as long as possible and by whatever means. But it was all right for women to go out and earn wages, since they had no important creative endeavors to be distracted from. The women didn't mind, or, if they did, they never said--not until years later.

Meanwhile rents were low, you could eat for next to nothing, toilets were in the hallway, bathtubs were in the kitchen and you never let the meter man in if you could help it. Con Ed trucks appeared on the streets on Friday mornings to turn delinquent payers off for the weekend, plunging them into penal darkness even if they could have paid up that very afternoon. Yahrzeit candles, or the Puerto Rican kind with rainbow-colored wax, were hoarded for such emergencies. Poems were written about roaches who lived in the stove, the woodwork, the innards of portable radios and shoes, and copulated in the chocolate smelling gas heat of winter. Wives swapped recipes for chicken-back stew or lentil soup with gizzards; tofu had not yet been discovered in the West.

* Joyce Johnson's memoir *Minor Characters: A Beat Memoir* was published by Houghton-Mifflin in 1983 and reprinted by Penguin in 1999.



In these final two paragraphs of the essay "Pioneers: A View of Home," poet and teacher Nikki Giovanni explores the meaning of home from a historical perspective. After paraphrasing two lines from Robert Frost's poem "The Death of the Hired Man," Giovanni illustrates her points through lists (tricolons and tetracolons) and a forceful anaphora.

from "Pioneers: A View of Home"* by Nikki Giovanni

They say Home . . . is where when you go . . . they have to take you in. I rather prefer Home . . . when you could go anywhere . . . is the place you prefer to be. I don't think of a home as a house, which is another thing I don't own. Certainly, though, I do live in a house that I have made my home. I won't even pretend living on the streets, sleeping in public parks, washing up at the bus or train station, eating out of garbage cans is a valid alternative to bedrooms, bathrooms, and kitchens whiffing good smells every time the furnace blows. But I also readily concede if there is no love a building will not compensate. The true joy, perhaps, of being a Black American is that we really have no home. Europeans bought us; but the Africans sold. If we are to be human we must forgive both . . . or neither. It has become acceptable, in the last decade or so, for intellectuals to concede Black Americans did not come here of our own volition; yet, I submit that just as slavery took away our choice so also did the overcrowded, disease-ridden cities of Europe; so also did religious persecution; so also did the abject and all but unspeakable Inquisition of the Spanish; so also did starvation in Italy; so also did the black, rotten potatoes lying in the fields of Ireland. No one came to the New World in a cruise ship. They all came because they had to. They were poor, hungry, criminal, persecuted individuals who would rather chance dropping off the ends of the earth than stay inert knowing both their body and spirit were slowly having the life squeezed from them. Whether it was a European booking passage on a boat, a slave chained to a ship, a wagon covered with sailcloth, they all headed toward the unknown with all nonessentials stripped away.

A pioneer has only two things: a deep desire to survive and an equally strong will to live. Home is not the place where our possessions and accomplishments are deposited and displayed. It is this earth that we have explored, the heaven we view with awe, these humans who, despite the flaws, we try to love and those who try to love us. It is the willingness to pioneer the one trek we all can make . . . no matter what our station or location in life . . . the existential reality that wherever there is life . . . we are at home.

* Nikki Giovanni's essay "Pioneers: A View of Home" was first published in *Artemis* (1988) and reprinted in the collection *Sacred Cows . . . and Other Edibles* (William Morrow, 1988).

In his second volume of memoirs, Ways of Escape (1980), Graham Greene observed that "Writing is a form of therapy; sometimes I wonder how all those who do not write, compose or paint can manage to escape the madness, melancholia, the panic fear which is inherent in the human situation." During his long career, the popular British author exorcised his demons in over two-dozen novels, four collections of short stories, and several volumes of essays and travel writings.

In this brief narrative from the opening of the essay "The Lost Childhood" (published in 1947), Greene recalls "the dangerous moment" when he first discovered that he could read.

from *The Lost Childhood* by Graham Greene

Perhaps it is only in childhood that books have any deep influence on our lives. In later life we admire, we are entertained, we may modify some views we already hold, but we are more likely to find in books merely a confirmation of what is in our minds already: as in a love affair it is our own features that we see reflected flatteringly back.

But in childhood all books are books of divination, telling us about the future, and like the fortune-teller who sees a long journey in the cards or death by water they influence the future. I suppose that is why books excited us so much. What do we ever get nowadays from reading to equal the excitement and the revelation in those first fourteen years? Of course I should be interested to hear that a new novel by Mr. E.M. Forster was going to appear this spring, but I could never compare that mild expectation of civilized pleasure with the missed heartbeat, the appalled glee I felt when I found on a library shelf a novel by Richard Haggard, Percy Westerman, Captain Brereton or Stanley Weyman which I had not read before. It is in those early years that I would look for the crisis, the moment when life took a new slant in its journey towards death.

I remember distinctly the suddenness with which a key turned in a lock and I found I could read--not just the sentences in a reading book with the syllables coupled like railway carriages, but a real book. It was paper-covered with the picture of a boy, bound and gagged, dangling at the end of a rope inside a well with the water rising above his waist--an adventure of Dixon Brett, detective. All a long summer holiday I kept my secret, as I believed: I did not want anybody to know that I could read. I suppose I half consciously realized even then that this was the dangerous moment. I was safe so long as I could not read--the wheels had not begun to turn, but now the future stood around on bookshelves everywhere waiting for the child to choose--the life of a chartered accountant perhaps, a colonial civil servant, a planter in China, a steady job in a bank, happiness and misery, eventually one particular form of death, for surely we choose our death much as we choose our job. It grows out of our acts and our evasions, out of our fears and out of our moments of courage. I suppose my mother must have discovered my secret, for on the journey home I was presented for the train with another real book, a copy of Ballantyne's *Coral Island* with only a single picture to look at, a coloured frontispiece. But I would admit nothing. All the long journey I stared at the one picture and never opened the book.

First published in 1947, the essay "The Lost Childhood" by Graham Greene appears in *The Lost Childhood and Other Essays* (1951) and also *Collected Essays* (The Bodley Head, 1969).

*In his novel *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man* (1912), poet, historian, and civil rights activist James Weldon Johnson offered a fictional version of his own journey from the American South to New York City in 1901. In these opening paragraphs from Chapter Six, the unnamed narrator recalls his first encounter with the deceptive enchantments of Manhattan.*



from *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man** by James Weldon Johnson

We steamed up into New York Harbor late one afternoon in spring. The last efforts of the sun were being put forth in turning the waters of the bay to glistening gold; the green islands on either side, in spite of their warlike mountings, looked calm and peaceful; the buildings of the town shone out in a reflected light which gave the city an air of enchantment; and, truly, it is an enchanted spot. New York City is the most fatally fascinating thing in America. She sits like a great witch at the gate of the country, showing her alluring white face and hiding her crooked hands and feet under the folds of her wide garments--constantly enticing thousands from far within, and tempting those who come from across the seas to go no farther. And all these become the victims of her caprice. Some she at once crushes beneath her cruel feet; others she condemns to a fate like that of galley slaves; a few she favors and fondles, riding them high on the bubbles of fortune; then with a sudden breath she blows the bubbles out and laughs mockingly as she watches them fall.

Twice I had passed through it, but this was really my first visit to New York; and as I walked about that evening, I began to feel the dread power of the city; the crowds, the lights, the excitement, the gaiety, and all its subtler stimulating influences began to take effect upon me. My blood ran quicker and I felt that I was just beginning to live. To some natures this stimulant of life in a great city becomes a thing as binding and necessary as opium is to one addicted to the habit. It becomes their breath of life; they cannot exist outside of it; rather than be deprived of it they are content to suffer hunger, want, pain, and misery; they would not exchange even a ragged and wretched condition among the great crowd for any degree of comfort away from it.

As soon as we landed, four of us went directly to a lodging house in 27th Street, just west of Sixth Avenue. The house was run by a short, stout mulatto man, who was exceedingly talkative and inquisitive. In fifteen minutes he not only knew the history of the past life of each one of us, but had a clearer idea of what we intended to do in the future than we ourselves. He sought this information so much with an air of being very particular as to whom he admitted into his house that we tremblingly answered every question that he asked. When we had become located we went out and got supper, then walked around until about ten o'clock. At that hour we met a couple of young fellows who lived in New York and were known to one of the members of our party. It was suggested we go to a certain place which was known by the proprietor's name. We turned into one of the cross streets and mounted the stoop of a house in about the middle of a block between Sixth and Seventh Avenues. One of the young men whom we had met rang a bell, and a man on the inside cracked the door a couple of inches; then opened it and let us in. We found ourselves in the hallway of what had once been a residence. The front parlor had been converted into a bar, and a half-dozen or so well-dressed men were in the room. We went in and after a general introduction had several rounds of beer. In the back parlor a crowd was sitting and standing around the walls of the room watching an exciting and noisy game of pool. I walked back and joined this crowd to watch the game, and principally to get away from the drinking party. The game was really interesting, the players being quite expert, and the excitement was heightened by the bets which were being made on the result. At times the antics and remarks of both players and spectators were amusing. When, at a critical point, a player missed a shot, he was deluged, by those financially interested in his making it, with a flood of epithets synonymous with "chump"; while from the others he would be jeered by such remarks as "Nigger, dat cue ain't no hoe-handle." I noticed that among this class of colored men the word "nigger" was freely used in about the same sense as the word "fellow," and sometimes as a term of almost endearment; but I soon learned that its use was positively and absolutely prohibited to white men.

*In this passage from her family memoir *The View from Morningside* (J. B. Lippincott, 1978), author and educator Constance Taber Colby illustrates her thesis with a striking, double-edged narrative.*

from *The View from Morningside: One Family's New York* by Constance Taber Colby

New York City has always been called a collection of neighborhoods. Nowadays, to be sure, some of the neighborhoods look more like armed camps or the ruined areas where the camps once stood. But in places like the Upper West Side of Manhattan, where my husband and I live with our two daughters, old-fashioned neighborhoods still exist. When we first came here years ago, we realized at once that we had moved into a community that had its own special landmarks and its own local pride. And we soon learned that the people who live here, like neighbors everywhere, trade gossip, make their daily rounds at predictable times, and, in general, keep an eye on things.

So when I saw Clara Morelli, retired school librarian and longtime resident of the neighborhood, standing at the sidewalk fruit stand, weighing a grapefruit in each hand, I hurried over to say hello. It had been some time since we last ran into each other during our weekday errands, and I'd been intending to ask the grocer if he had any news of her.

"I've been in the hospital," she said, almost proudly. And then she told me why.

She had been coming home from eight o'clock mass one Sunday morning a few weeks earlier when she was grabbed from behind and slammed down to the pavement. She said she held up her purse at once and begged, "Take anything you want, only please don't hurt me. I'm 80 years old, please don't." But her two assailants not only seized her purse and tore off her wristwatch (which had belonged to her mother) but also began kicking her face as she writhed and wept. The street was empty of passersby at that hour on a Sunday, and only the arrival of a cruising taxicab, which slowed immediately, saved Miss Morelli from severe injury and possibly death. As it was, the driver had to take her to St. Luke Hospital, where she stayed for three days, recovering from shock and concussion. "He was such a nice man," she told me. "And I didn't think to get his name so I could thank him."

I didn't know what to say. What could anyone say except that it was awful?

"Of course, it was partly my own fault," Miss Morelli went on. "I should never have gone down a side street in that neighborhood. It was up near St. Mary's Chapel, you know."

"Have you ever considered leaving New York?" I asked. "Couldn't you go stay with your sister in Maine?"

Her look was one of complete astonishment.

"Whatever for?" she demanded. "Why should I move away? There's no place on earth I'd rather live than right here in Manhattan."

But it's just not safe here!" I said.

"Safe? What's safe?" She gave the New Yorker's characteristic little shrug, palms up, head cocked to one side. "It's not safe anywhere these days, if you ask me. No, as far as I'm concerned, I agree with what my butcher always says. You know Bernie, down at the Morningside Market? He says, 'Safe is how lucky you are.'"

"Well, maybe you're right. But even putting aside the danger, I don't think this is really a good place to live any more. Everything's going downhill. The city seems to be falling apart right in front of our eyes. I keep asking myself why we stay here. Is it really worth it?"

"Is it worth it?" She lowered her voice and leaned closer as if she were going to tell me a great secret. "Is it worth it? Well, count up your memories--that's my answer. Count up your memories."

*Bill Barich, an American writer now living in Dublin, Ireland, is the author of several works of nonfiction, including *Laughing in the Hills*, a classic account of racetrack life.*

*About travel writing Barich has said that "the character of any given place is best reflected in its daily routines, so I tended to gravitate toward situations where the most ordinary and familiar activities were going on." In "Steelhead on the Russian," the first essay in his collection *Traveling Light*, Barich recounts his experiences fishing for trout in northern California's Russian River. Here, after seeking advice from his mentor, Paul Deeds, he describes his first effort to "play the fish."*



from *Steelhead on the Russian* by Bill Barich

That evening, just as the sky was turning, I stationed myself near a deep pool below a rocky outcrop and started casting. Deed's weights were much heavier than the lures I'd been using. The one I tied to the shorter strand of leader bounced properly on the bottom--tick, tick, tick, like seconds passing. Suddenly, the berry stopped in transit, as if a fish had mouthed it. I lifted my rod, preparing to do battle, but I felt no resistance. Soon enough, I reeled in a fat sucker; it flopped onto the shore like a sack of mush. Suckers are trash fish, insults to divinity. They have chubby humanoid lips and appear to be begging for cigars. It's possible to envision them wearing suspenders and sitting on park benches, acting like heirs to the continent's watershed. I released mine, stifling a desire to kick it, and moved toward the center of the pool. I put my next cast under some willows on the opposite shore. Tick, tick, tick: again the bait stopped, and again I set the hook. This time, a steelhead shot out of the water. I played, or prayed, the fish for ten minutes, certain that I'd lose it, but my luck held, and I was able finally to draw it into the shallows and beach it. The fish was small, about four pounds, and male; so much milt leaked from him that a white puddle formed on the sand. I dispatched him quickly, suffused with guilt, but the guilt changed to atavistic pride once I had threaded a willow branch through his mouth and out of his gills and begun the uphill trek to my house. I stopped on a rise and looked back at the valley, which was vanishing in purple haze. As Zane Grey put it, "the sunset was beautiful, resembling ships of silver clouds with rosy sails that crossed the lilac sea of sky in the west."

American author, journalist, and teacher John Hersey (1914-1993) is best known today for two early works: the novel *A Bell for Adano*, which was awarded a Pulitzer Prize in 1945, and *Hiroshima*, which traces the lives of six people who survived the atomic bombing of Japan in 1945. Hersey published more than 25 books over his long career and is considered one of the leading practitioners of modern creative nonfiction.



Originally published in *The New Yorker* magazine, "Over the Mad River" describes the destruction wrought by a hurricane on the small city of Winsted, Connecticut in August 1955. Here, in a passage that might be favorably compared to Jack London's classic account of the San Francisco earthquake and fire ("*The Story of an Eyewitness*"), Hersey offers a narrative report on the flooding of Winsted.

from "Over the Mad River"* by John Hersey

It was six o'clock, and the flood had reached its crest, which it was to hold for nearly six hours. The rain continued. Highland Lake was running over its spillways and tearing out threatening gullies right across the macadam road on the causeway on either side of them and causing terrible damage in factories and homes between the lake and the river below. All the way from Norfolk, the Mad River was brimming. Along Main Street, it was fifteen feet above its normal level, and the water was ten feet deep in the street itself. It was literally ripping up Main Street. The pavement and sidewalks were being sliced away and gutted six feet deep. The water had broken the plate-glass windows of most of the stores along the street and had ruined their stocks. Winsted Motors, a Buick showroom and service station that had straddled the river high up the street, had been completely demolished, and its new and used cars were rolling all the way downtown, and its roof had lodged itself in mid-street right in front of the Town Hall. On the second floor of the Town Hall, forty-one policemen and Civil Defense workers and the chairlady of the Winsted Red Cross were marooned. All but two of the town's twelve bridges had collapsed or were about to. A four-story hotel at the foot of the street, the Clifton, had floated off its foundation and into the river and downstream three-quarters of a mile, and had settled in the town ball field, more or less erect but with its two lower floors worn away. The water was doing damage to private property that the town estimated at nearly twenty-eight million dollars--more than the entire grand list of assessed taxable property, for assessments in Winsted, as generally in Connecticut, were considerably under real values.

* "Over the Mad River" by John Hersey originally appeared in the September 17, 1955 issue of *The New Yorker* magazine. A lightly revised version was published in the collection *Here to Stay*, Paragon House Publishers, 1988.

Best known for his first novel, Mrs. Bridge (1959), and an imaginatively constructed biography of General George Custer, Son Of The Morning Star (1985), Evan S. Connell has twice been nominated for the National Book Award and in 1987 received the American Academy of Arts and Letters Award for Literature. In a Salon.com profile published in 2000, Greg Bottoms described Connell as "a trailblazer, a troubadour, one of the first to put the literary scalpel to the suburban skin."

The following narrative sketch, from the final chapter of Mrs. Bridge, offers an image of entrapment that is both frightening and absurd. (Note that this passage served as the basis for our exercise Sentence Combining: "Mrs. Bridge.")



Hello? from Mrs. Bridge by Evan S. Connell*

One December morning near the end of the year when snow was falling moist and heavy for miles all around, so that the earth and the sky were indivisible, Mrs. Bridge emerged from her home and spread her umbrella. With small cautious steps she proceeded to the garage, where she pressed the button and waited impatiently for the door to lift. She was in a hurry to drive downtown to buy some Irish lace antimacassars that were advertised in the newspaper, and she was planning to spend the remainder of the day browsing through the stores because it was Harriet's day off and the house was empty--so empty.

She had backed just halfway out of the garage when the engine died. She touched the starter and listened without concern because, despite her difficulties with the Lincoln, she had grown to feel secure in it. The Lincoln was a number of years old and occasionally recalcitrant, but she could not bear the thought of parting with it, and in the past had resisted this suggestion of her husband, who, mildly puzzled by her attachment to the car, had allowed her to keep it.

Thinking she had flooded the engine, which was often true, Mrs. Bridge decided to wait a minute or so.

Presently, she tried again, and again, and then again. Deeply disappointed, she opened the door to get out and discovered she had stopped in such a position that the car doors were prevented from opening more than a few inches on one side by the garage partition, and on the other side by the wall. Having tried all four doors, she began to understand that until she could attract someone's attention she was trapped. She pressed the horn, but there was not a sound. Half inside and half outside she remained.

For a long time she sat there with her gloved hands folded in her lap, not knowing what to do. Once she looked at herself in the mirror. Finally she took the keys from the ignition and began tapping on the window, and she called to anyone who might be listening. "Hello? Hello out there?"

But no one answered, unless it was the falling snow.

* Mrs. Bridge, by Evan S. Connell, was first published by the Viking Press in 1959. It is currently available in a paperback edition published by Counterpoint (2005).

Nick Carraway, the narrator of F. Scott Fitzgerald's novel The Great Gatsby, is the anonymous observer of New York City in the early 1920s. Try reading these two paragraphs aloud so that you can hear the effects of Fitzgerald's active verbs and the distinct rhythms of his prose.



from *The Great Gatsby** by F. Scott Fitzgerald

I began to like New York, the racy, adventurous feel of it at night and the satisfaction that the constant flicker of men and women and machines gives to the restless eye. I liked to walk up Fifth Avenue and pick out romantic women from the crowd and imagine that in a few minutes I was going to enter their lives, and no one would ever know or disapprove. Sometimes, in my mind, I followed them to their apartments on the corners of hidden streets, and they turned and smiled back at me before they faded through a door into warm darkness. At the enchanted metropolitan twilight I felt a haunting loneliness sometimes, and felt it in others--poor young clerks who loitered in front of windows waiting until it was time for the solitary restaurant dinner-- young clerks in the dusk, wasting the most poignant moments of night and life.

Again at eight o'clock, when the dark lanes of the Forties were five deep with throbbing taxi cabs, bound for the theatre district, I felt a sinking in my heart. Forms leaned together in the taxis as they waited, and voices sang, and there was laughter from unheard jokes, and lighted cigarettes outlined unintelligible gestures inside. Imagining that I, too, was hurrying toward gaiety and sharing their intimate excitement, I wished them well.

Originally published by Scribner's in 1925, Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* was republished as a Penguin Popular Classic in 2007.

*The author of two novels and several volumes of essays, William H. Gass has received numerous awards, including the American Book Award (for *The Tunnel*) and the PEN/Nabokov Lifetime Achievement award. Noted for his experimental use of language, Gass has been called "the finest prose stylist in America."*

*In this sketch of Culp, the limerick-writer (from *The Tunnel*), Gass relies on onomatopoeia and other sound effects to illustrate the character's cartoonish ability to "whine, yelp, growl, howl, and bay with the worst of them."*



from *The Tunnel** (1995) – by William H. Gass

[F]rom a distance, Culp seems presentable and reasonable and normal enough. Approach, however, and you'll hear whirs and clicks, rhymes and puns, jocularities in dialect, jingles in dirty high-schoolese, gibberish he says is pure Sioux.

Culp's conversation is made-up like his Halloween Indian's face. It is simply streaked with zaps, wheeps, and other illustrative noises. I guess I shouldn't say "simply" or "streaked" either. That's not exact. His speech is not outlined or punctuated with clacks or thonks in any ordinary way. It is engulfed in them--washed with them as though they were spit--the way street sounds surround us--surround us, you remember? during that intense noontime tête-à-tête in a sidewalk café where I confessed my passion to an emptied cup and you lifted your chin to look coolly away; yet that comparison is not correct either, since Culp's incessant zits, yelps, zooms, and hip hips intervene; they serve as symbols themselves and carry on the action. If his pickup hasn't started, first we hear last night's icy wind, and the oil in the engine thicken. The truck's doors open with a groan--which he gives us. His trousers slither over the--ah!--cold seat and the key snicks entering its lock. The engine's frozen agonies are minutely replayed: the starter's grind, the muffled puff of a single cylinder firing. Then the smell of a flooded engine is delicately rendered by, as if from a distance, the bassoon. Finally: zrrBLOOM! GLOOM ROOM AROOM!

There is palpable silence, an emptiness in the line on the page; in the corridor there is no one, or the heart. Culp shrinks. He is shifting into another scenario. His right hand becomes a dinky little car puckpuckpucketing along toward school.

I heard not a single pucket as I approached the crowded café. The clatter of the city collected like lint in an unconscious corner: the corner, perhaps, the café was bent around. A comic strip.

Culp loved to reenact them, enliven their lines. He was surely brought up on Mickey Mouse and Porky Pig. He falsettoes in fright, as they do; he zips; he squeals to a halt; he vaaroo-ooms; he tsks; he thonks. His thonks are worthy of the Three Stooges. He does all the Popeye voices, but prefers Olive Oyl's. He has noises for the nittles, the grawlix, the quimps, the jarns. He blows each ballon up before your ears. He reels home, +'s on his eyes, singing the spirll that rises like heat from his head.

Don't ask him the time. He'll tell you it's dong-dong-dong-a-ding and ten ticks.

* *The Tunnel* by William H. Gass was originally published by Knopf in 1995 and reprinted by Dalkey Archive Press in 1999.

Paralepsis is a rhetorical strategy by which a speaker says (often emphatically and at great length) what he or she claims isn't worth saying at all. In this passage from "The Tooth, the Whole Tooth, and Nothing but the Tooth," Robert Benchley employs paralepsis for comic effect, describing "the scene in the dentist's waiting-room" after disclaiming any intention of doing so.



from "The Tooth, the Whole Tooth, and Nothing but the Tooth"* by Robert Benchley

Too often has the scene in the dentist's waiting-room been described for me to try to do it again here. They are all alike. The antiseptic smell, the ominous hum from the operating-rooms, the ancient Digests, and the silent, sullen group of waiting patients, each trying to look unconcerned and cordially disliking everyone else in the room--all these have been sung by poets of far greater lyric powers than mine. (Not that I really think that they are greater than mine, but that's the customary form of excuse for not writing something you haven't got time or space to do. As a matter of fact, I think I could do it much better than it has ever been done before.)

I can only say that, as you sit looking, with unseeing eyes, through a large book entitled *The War in Pictures*, you would gladly change places with the most lowly of God's creatures. It is inconceivable that there should be anyone worse off than you, unless perhaps it is some of the poor wretches who are waiting with you.

That one over in the arm-chair, nervously tearing to shreds a copy of *The Dental Review and Practical Inlay Worker*. She may have something frightful the trouble with her. She couldn't possibly look more worried. Perhaps it is very, very painful. This thought cheers you up considerably. What cowards women are in times like these!

And then there comes the sound of voices from the next room.

"All right, Doctor, and if it gives me any more pain shall I call you up? . . . Do you think that it will bleed much more? . . . Saturday morning, then, at eleven. . . . Good bye, Doctor."

And a middle-aged woman emerges (all women are middle-aged when emerging from the dentist's office) looking as if she were playing the big emotional scene in *John Ferguson*. A wisp of hair waves dissolutely across her forehead between her eyes. Her face is pale, except for a slight inflammation at the corners of her mouth, and in her eyes is that far-away look of one who has been face to face with Life. But she is through. She should care how she looks.

The nurse appears, and looks inquiringly at each one in the room. Each one in the room evades the nurse's glance in one last, futile attempt to fool someone and get away without seeing the dentist. But she spots you and nods pleasantly. God, how pleasantly she nods! There ought to be a law against people being as pleasant as that.

"The doctor will see you now," she says.

* "The Tooth, the Whole Tooth, and Nothing but the Tooth" originally appeared in *Love Conquers All*, by Robert Benchley (1922).

Though best known as a novelist (The Grapes of Wrath, 1939), John Steinbeck was also a prolific journalist and social critic. In the essay "Paradox and Dream" (from his final nonfiction book, America and the Americans), Steinbeck examined the paradoxical values of his fellow citizens. His familiar paratactic style (heavy on coordination, light on dependent clauses) is clearly illustrated here in the first three paragraphs of the essay.



from "Paradox and Dream" (1966) by John Steinbeck

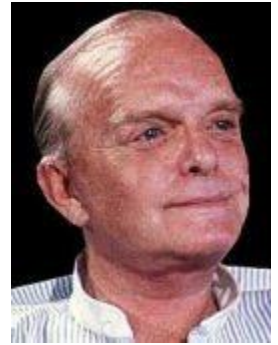
One of the generalities most often noted about Americans is that we are a restless, a dissatisfied, a searching people. We bridle and buck under failure, and we go mad with dissatisfaction in the face of success. We spend our time searching for security, and hate it when we get it. For the most part we are an intemperate people: we eat too much when we can, drink too much, indulge our senses too much. Even in our so-called virtues we are intemperate: a teetotaler is not content not to drink--he must stop all the drinking in the world; a vegetarian among us would outlaw the eating of meat. We work too hard, and many die under the strain; and then to make up for that we play with a violence as suicidal.

The result is that we seem to be in a state of turmoil all the time, both physically and mentally. We are able to believe that our government is weak, stupid, overbearing, dishonest, and inefficient, and at the same time we are deeply convinced that it is the best government in the world, and we would like to impose it upon everyone else. We speak of the American Way of Life as though it involved the ground rules for the governance of heaven. A man hungry and unemployed through his own stupidity and that of others, a man beaten by a brutal policeman, a woman forced into prostitution by her own laziness, high prices, availability, and despair--all bow with reverence toward the American Way of Life, although each one would look puzzled and angry if he were asked to define it. We scramble and scrabble up the stony path toward the pot of gold we have taken to mean security. We trample friends, relatives, and strangers who get in the way of our achieving it, and once we get it we shower it on psychoanalysts to try to find out why we are unhappy, and finally--if we have enough of the gold--we contribute it back to the nation in the form of foundations and charities.

We fight our way in, and try to buy our way out. We are alert, curious, hopeful, and we take more drugs designed to make us unaware than any other people. We are self-reliant and at the same time completely dependent. We are aggressive, and defenseless. Americans overindulge their children; the children in turn are overly dependent on their parents. We are complacent in our possessions, in our houses, in our education; but it is hard to find a man or woman who does not want something better for the next generation. Americans are remarkably kind and hospitable and open with both guests and strangers; and yet they will make a wide circle around the man dying on the pavement. Fortunes are spent getting cats out of trees and dogs out of sewer pipes; but a girl screaming for help in the street draws only slammed doors, closed windows, and silence.

"Paradox and Dream" first appeared in John Steinbeck's *America and Americans*, published by Viking in 1966.

Novelist, story writer, and reporter Truman Capote is best known for In Cold Blood (1965), a "nonfiction novel" about the slaughter of a Kansas farming family in 1959. In these three paragraphs from part one of In Cold Blood, Capote offers a brief history and description of Garden City, Kansas, site of the trials of the two murderers. Observe how the author frequently interrupts his sentences (with parentheses) to insert factual and illustrative details.



from *In Cold Blood** by Truman Capote

The distance between Olathe, a suburb of Kansas, and Holcomb, which might be called a suburb of Garden City, is approximately four hundred miles.

A town of eleven thousand, Garden City began assembling its founders soon after the Civil War. An itinerant buffalo hunter, Mr. C.J. (Buffalo) Jones, had much to do with its subsequent expansion from a collection of huts and hitching posts into an opulent ranching center with razzle-dazzle saloons, an opera house, and the plushiest hotel anywhere between Kansas City and Denver--in brief, a specimen of frontier fanciness that rivaled a more famous settlement fifty miles east of it, Dodge City. Along with Buffalo Jones, who lost his money and then his mind (the last years of his life were spent haranguing street groups against the wanton extermination of the beasts he himself had so profitably slaughtered), the glammers of the past are today entombed. Some souvenirs exist; a moderately colorful row of commercial buildings is known as the Buffalo Block, and the once splendid Windsor Hotel, with its still splendid high-ceilinged saloon and its atmosphere of spittoons and potted palms, endures amid the variety stores and supermarkets as a Main Street landmark--one comparatively unpatronized, for the Windsor's dark, huge chambers and echoing hallways, evocative as they are, cannot compete with the air-conditioned amenities offered at the trim little Hotel Warren, or with the Wheat Lands Motel's individual television sets and "Heated Swimming Pool."

Anyone who has made the coast-to-coast journey across America, whether by train or by car, has probably passed through Garden City, but it is reasonable to assume that few travelers remember the event. It seems just another fair-sized town in the middle--almost the exact middle--of the continental United States. Not that the inhabitants would tolerate such an opinion--perhaps rightly. Though they may overstate the case ("Look all over the world, and you won't find friendlier people or fresher air or sweeter drinking water," and "I could go to Denver at triple the salary, but I've got five kids, and I figure there's no better place to raise kids than right here. Swell schools with every kind of sport. We even have a junior college," and "I came out here to practice law. A temporary thing, I never planned to stay. But when the chance came to move, I thought, Why go? What the hell for? Maybe it's not New York--but who wants New York? Good neighbors, people who care about each other, that's what counts. And everything else a decent man needs--we've got that, too. Beautiful churches. A golf course"), the newcomer to Garden City, once he has adjusted to the nightly after-eight silence of Main Street, discovers much to support the defensive boastings of the citizenry: a well-run public library, a competent daily newspaper, green-lawned and shady squares here and there, placid residential streets where animals and children are safe to run free, a big, rambling park complete with a small menagerie ("See the Polar Bears!" "See Penny the Elephant!"), and a swimming pool that consumes several acres ("World's Largest FREE Swim-pool!"). Such accessories, and the dust and the winds and the ever-calling train whistles, add up to a "home town" that is probably remembered with nostalgia by those who have left it, and that, for those who have remained, provides a sense of roots and contentment.

N. Scott Momaday's novel House Made of Dawn, winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1969, tells the story of a young American Indian named Abel. In this passage, Abel observes two eagles in flight--"an awful, holy sight, full of magic and meaning."

Observe how Momaday uses present and past participial phrases to convey the rapid movements of the eagles.



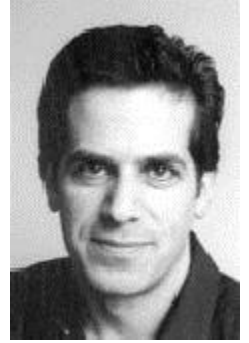
from House Made of Dawn* by N. Scott Momaday

Then he saw the eagles across the distance, two of them, riding low in the depths and rising diagonally toward him. He did not know what they were at first, and he stood watching them, their far, silent flight erratic and wild in the bright morning. They rose and swung across the skyline, veering close at last, and he knelt down behind the rock, dumb with pleasure and excitement, holding on to them with his eyes.

They were golden eagles, a male and a female, in their mating flight. They were cavorting, spinning and spiraling on the cold clear columns of air, and they were beautiful. They swooped and hovered, leaning on the air, and swung close together, feinting and screaming with delight. The female was full-grown, and the span of her broad wings was greater than any man's height. There was a fine flourish to her motion; she was deceptively, incredibly fast, and her pivots and wheels were wide and full-blown. But her great weight was streamlined and perfectly controlled. She carried a rattlesnake; it hung shining from her feet, limp and curving out in the trail of her flight. Suddenly her wings and tail fanned, catching full on the wind, and for an instant she was still, widespread and spectral in the blue, while her mate flared past and away, turning around in the distance to look for her. Then she began to beat upward at an angle from the rim until she was small in the sky, and she let go of the snake. It fell slowly, writhing and rolling, floating out like a bit of silver thread against the wide backdrop of the land. She held still above, buoyed up on the cold current, her crop and hackles gleaming like copper in the sun. The male swerved and sailed. He was younger than she and a little more than half as large. He was quicker, tighter in his moves. He let the carrion drift by; then suddenly he gathered himself and stooped, sliding down in a blur of motion to the strike. He hit the snake in the head, with not the slightest deflection in his course or speed, cracking its long body like a whip. Then he rolled and swung upward in a great pendulum arc, riding out his momentum. At the top of his glide he let go of the snake in turn, but the female did not go for it. Instead she soared out over the plain, nearly out of sight, like a mote receding into the haze of the far mountain. The male followed, and Abel watched them go, straining to see, saw them veer once, dip and disappear.

* N. Scott Momaday's novel House Made of Dawn was originally published in 1968 by Harper & Row. It was last reprinted in 2010 in a Harper Perennial Modern Classics paperback edition.

The narrator of Jonathan Lethem's novel Motherless Brooklyn (1999) is Lionel Essrog, an orphan with Tourette syndrome. In the novel's opening paragraph, which follows, Essrog describes his neurological disorder through metaphors and extended personification.



from *Motherless Brooklyn* by Jonathan Lethem

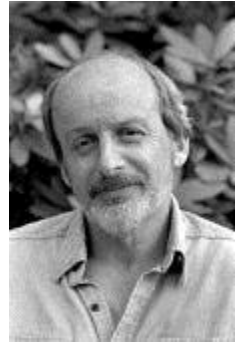
Context is everything. Dress me up and see. I'm a carnival barker, an auctioneer, a downtown performance artist, a speaker in tongues, a senator drunk on filibuster. I've got Tourette's. My mouth won't quit, though mostly I whisper or subvocalize like I'm reading aloud, my Adam's apple bobbing, jaw muscle beating like a miniature heart under my cheek, the noise suppressed, the words escaping silently, mere ghosts of themselves, husks empty of breath and tone. (If I were a Dick Tracy villain, I'd have to be Mumbles.) In this diminished form the words rush out of the cornucopia of my brain to course over the surface of the world, tickling reality like fingers on piano keys. Caressing, nudging. They're an invisible army on a peacekeeping mission, a peaceable horde. They mean no harm. They placate, interpret, massage. Everywhere they're smoothing down imperfections, putting hairs in place, putting ducks in a row, replacing divots. Counting and polishing the silver. Patting old ladies gently on the behind, eliciting a giggle. Only--here's the rub--when they find too much perfection, when the surface is already buffed smooth, the ducks already orderly, the old ladies complacent, then my little army rebels, breaks into the stores. Reality needs a prick here and there, the carpet needs a flaw. My words begin plucking at threads nervously, seeking purchase, a weak point, a vulnerable ear. That's when it comes, the urge to shout in the church, the nursery, the crowded movie house. It's an itch at first. Inconsequential. But that itch is soon a torrent behind a straining dam. Noah's flood. That itch is my whole life. Here it comes now. Cover your ears. Build an ark.

"Eat me!" I scream.

Motherless Brooklyn, by Jonathan Lethem, was published by Doubleday in 1999.

A recipient of the National Book Award and two National Book Critics Circle awards, E.L. Doctorow has published several critically acclaimed novels, including Ragtime (1975) and The March (2005). The following passage, from Chapter Five of his autobiographical novel World's Fair (1985), is told from the point of view of Edgar Altschuler, a boy who (like Doctorow) grew up in the Bronx in the 1930s.

With his customary attention to precise details, Doctorow describes the small rituals carried out by the boy's grandmother, a "desiccated, asthmatic little woman" whose gentleness has been consumed by senility and rage.



from *World's Fair** (1985) by E.L. Doctorow

Grandma's room I regarded as a dark den of primitive rites and practices. On Friday evenings whoever was home gathered at her door while she lit her Sabbath candles. She had two wobbly old brass candlesticks that she kept well polished. She had brought them many years ago from the old country, which I later found out was Russia. She covered her head with a shawl, and with my mother standing beside her to keep the house from burning down. Grandma lit the white candles and waved her hands over the flames and then covered her eyes with her wrinkled hands and prayed. The sight of my own grandma performing what was, after all, only a ritual blessing seemed to me something else--her enacted submission to the errant and malign forces of life. That an adult secretly gave way to this sentiment I found truly frightening. It confirmed my suspicion that what grown-ups told me in my life of instruction was not the whole truth.

Grandma kept her room clean and tidy. She had a very impressive cedar hope chest covered with a lace shawl, and on her dresser a silver hairbrush and comb. There was a plain slat-back rocking chair under a standing lamp so she could read her prayer book, or Siddur. And on an end table beside the chair was a flat tin box packed with a medicinal leaf that was shredded like tobacco. This was the centerpiece of her most consistent and mysterious ritual. She removed the lid from this blue tin box and turned it on its back and used it to burn a pinch of the leaf. She applied a match and blew on the leaf as my brother blew on punk, to get it started. It made tiny sputtering pops and hisses as it burned. She turned her chair toward it and sat inhaling the thin wisps of smoke--it was a treatment for her asthma. I knew it helped her breathing, and that it was scientific, having been purchased from Rosoff's Drugstore on 174th Street. But the smell was pungent, as if from the underworld. I didn't know, nor did any of my family seem to know, that this medicinal leaf my grandma burned was marijuana. Even had they known, it would have held no significance, since it was readily and legally available without prescription. But to this day the smoke of grass produces in me memories of the choking harsh bitter rage of an exile from the shetl, a backfired life full of fume and sparks, like a Fourth of July held in an open grave and projecting on the night a skull's leer and a clasp of crossed bones.

NOTE: The sentences in our Exercise in Identifying Adjectives have been adapted from the sentences in these two paragraphs by E.L. Doctorow.

* From Chapter Five of *World's Fair*, by E.L. Doctorow (Random House, 1985). *World's Fair* is currently available as a Random House Trade Paperback (2007).

Essayist and novelist Joan Didion (born in 1934) has a habit of revealing aspects of character (her own and others) through her descriptions of places. Consider the effects created by polysyndeton in the opening paragraphs of her autobiographical essay "Goodbye to All That."



from "Goodbye to All That"* (1968) by Joan Didion

It is easy to see the beginnings of things, and harder to see the ends. I can remember now, with a clarity that makes the nerves in the back of my neck constrict, when New York began for me, but I cannot lay my finger upon the moment it ended, can never cut through the ambiguities and second starts and broken resolves to the exact place on the page where the heroine is no longer as optimistic as she once was. When I first saw New York I was twenty, and it was summertime, and I got off a DC-7 at the old Idlewild temporary terminal in a new dress which had seemed very smart in Sacramento but seemed less smart already, even in the old Idlewild temporary terminal, and the warm air smelled of mildew and some instinct, programmed by all the movies I had ever seen and all the songs I had ever heard sung and all the stories I had ever read about New York, informed me that it would never be quite the same again. In fact it never was. Some time later there was a song on all the jukeboxes on the Upper East Side that went "but where is the schoolgirl who used to be me," and if it was late enough at night I used to wonder that. I know now that almost everyone wonders something like that, sooner or later and no matter what he or she is doing, but one of the mixed blessings of being twenty and twenty-one and even twenty-three is the conviction that nothing like this, all evidence to the contrary notwithstanding, has ever happened to anyone before.

Of course it might have been some other city, had circumstances been different and the time been different and had I been different, might have been Paris or Chicago or even San Francisco, but because I am talking about myself I am talking here about New York. That first night I opened my window on the bus into town and watched for the skyline, but all I could see were the wastes of Queens and big signs that said MIDTOWN TUNNEL THIS LANE and then a flood of summer rain (even that seemed remarkable and exotic, for I had come out of the West where there was no summer rain), and for the next three days I sat wrapped in blankets in a hotel room air-conditioned to 35 degrees and tried to get over a bad cold and a high fever. It did not occur to me to call a doctor, because I knew none, and although it did occur to me to call the desk and ask that the air conditioner be turned off, I never called, because I did not know how much to tip whoever might come—was anyone ever so young? I am here to tell you that someone was. All I could do during those three days was talk long-distance to the boy I already knew I would never marry in the spring. I would stay in New York, I told him, just six months, and I could see the Brooklyn Bridge from my window. As it turned out the bridge was the Triborough, and I stayed eight years.

* "Goodbye to All That" appears in Joan Didion's first essay collection, *Slouching Toward Bethlehem* (Simon and Schuster, 1968).

British novelist Julie Myerson, author of the nonfiction work Home: The Story of Everyone Who Ever Lived in Our House (HarperPerennial, 2004), writes a weekly column for the Financial Times. Here, in the concluding paragraphs to one of those columns, Myerson relies on polysyndeton to re-create a moment that "ought to have been . . . significant."



from "A Sad-Grand Moment That Never Came" by Julie Myerson

On the afternoon we moved out of our house, once the removal men had taken everything and all that was left was fluff and dust and picture marks on the walls and the place was so echoey that even our own voices didn't really sound like ours anymore, on that afternoon my husband and I walked around those empty rooms one last time to say goodbye.

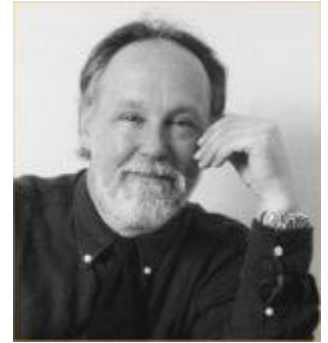
It ought to have been a significant moment, a sad-grand moment, a moment of closure. But it wasn't, not really. Instead what I now most remember is glancing down out of our (already old) bedroom window and seeing our children standing down in the street. And they were chatting and laughing and messing about, our youngest bouncing a basketball and having to chase after it every so often, our eldest telling the middle one something funny or rude or both, all three of them robustly oblivious to the drama of leaving.

And finally Chloë glanced up and saw me standing there and frowned. "When are we going?" she mouthed impatiently. "Now," I told her as I moved away from the old sash window for the last time. "Now."

"A Sad-Grand Moment That Never Came," by Julie Myerson, was published in the "House & Home" section of the Financial Times on January 5/6, 2008.

A recipient of the National Book Award along with many other honors, American author Barry Lopez is best known for his books and essays about the "relationship between the physical landscape and human culture."

In this excerpt from Arctic Dreams (1986), Lopez traces the process by which North American caribou "trek hundreds of miles each year between their winter range near the tree line and well-defined calving grounds on the tundra." Observe how Lopez maintains our interest through varied sentence structures as well as precise descriptive and informative details.



Migration of the Caribou from Arctic Dreams, by Barry Lopez

Scientists are uncertain what starts caribou on their northward journey--knowledge that they have stored enough fat to carry them through, perhaps. They endure spring blizzards on their journeys and cross ice-choked rivers with great determination and a sure sense of bearing, but they also choose paths of least resistance over the land, often following in each other's tracks through deep snow. Pregnant cows are normally in the lead; mature bulls may be as much as a month behind the cows, or never arrive at the calving grounds at all. By the end of their arduous journey the females are thin and tattered-looking. Behind them, in places where they have had to cross rivers in a stage of breakup, there may be the carcasses of hundreds of drowned and fatally injured animals. Their calving grounds, writes biologist George Calef, appear "bleak and inhospitable. Meltwater lies in pools on the frozen ground, the land is often shrouded in fog, and the wind whistles unceasingly among the stunted plants and bare rocks." The advantages of these dismal regions, however, are several. The number of predators is low, wolves having dropped away from the herds at more suitable locations for denning to the south. Food plants are plentiful. And these grounds either offer better protection from spring snowstorms or experience fewer storms overall than adjacent regions.

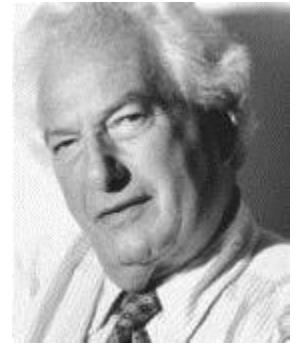
Most calves are born within a few days of each other, and calving occurs at least a month before swarms of emergent mosquitoes, blackflies, warble flies, and botflies embark on a harassment of the caribou that seems merciless to a human observer. If one were to think of events that typify arctic life--the surge of energy one feels with daily gains of ten or fifteen minutes of sunlight in the spring, or waking up one morning to find the ocean frozen--one would also include that feeling of relief that descends over a caribou herd when a wind comes up and puts hordes of weak-flying mosquitoes to the ground.

After calving, cows and their offspring join immature animals, barren cows, and the bulls in "postcalving" aggregations of 75,000 or more animals, their numbers stretching from horizon to horizon. They trek slowly south, breaking up into smaller herds. The first fall storms catch them in open country, and in the cold, snowy air these "gray shepherds of the tundra," as the Alaskan poet John Haines calls them, "pass like islands of smoke." They take shelter in the short timber of the taiga for the winter.

After the herds have gone, the calving grounds can seem like the most deserted places on earth, even if you can sense strongly that the caribou will be back next year. When they do return, hardly anything will have changed. A pile of caribou droppings may take thirty years to remineralize on the calving grounds. The carcass of a wolf-killed caribou may lie undisturbed for three or four years. Time pools in the stillness here and then dissipates. The country is emptied of movement.

This passage appears in Chapter Five ("Migration: The Corridors of Breath") of *Arctic Dreams: Imagination and Desire in a Northern Landscape*, by Barry Lopez (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986; reprinted in a Vintage paperback, 2001).

Since the publication of Catch-22 in 1961, the title of Joseph Heller's first novel has become a byword for the absurdity of war and, by extension, any senseless or illogical circumstance. In these two paragraphs from the opening chapter, we learn how Yossarian, a U.S. Air Force pilot in World War II, fights off boredom in a military hospital. Consider how the steps involved in his private "war" on language (a kind of process analysis) introduce the novel's theme of the absurd response to an absurd predicament.



from Catch-22* by Joseph Heller

All the officer patients in the ward were forced to censor letters written by all the enlisted-men patients, who were kept in residence in wards of their own. It was a monotonous job, and Yossarian was disappointed to learn that the lives of enlisted men were only slightly more interesting than the lives of officers. After the first day he had no curiosity at all. To break the monotony he invented games. Death to all modifiers, he declared one day, and out of every letter that passed through his hands went every adverb and every adjective. The next day he made war on articles. He reached a much higher plane of creativity the following day when he blacked out everything in the letters but a, an and the. That erected more dynamic intralinear tensions, he felt, and in just about every case left a message far more universal. Soon he was proscribing parts of salutations and signatures and leaving the text untouched. One time he blacked out all but the salutation "Dear Mary" from a letter, and at the bottom he wrote, "I yearn for you tragically. A. T. Tappman, Chaplain, U.S. Army." A. T. Tappman was the group chaplain's name.

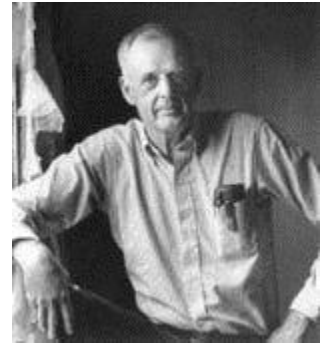
When he had exhausted all possibilities in the letters, he began attacking the names and addresses on the envelopes, obliterating whole homes and streets, annihilating entire metropolises with careless flicks of his wrist as though he were God. Catch-22 required that each censored letter bear the censoring officer's name. Most letters he didn't read at all. On those he didn't read at all he wrote his own name. On those he did read he wrote, "Washington Irving." When that grew monotonous he wrote, "Irving Washington." Censoring the envelopes had serious repercussions, produced a ripple of anxiety on some ethereal military echelon that floated a C.I.D. man back into the ward posing as a patient. They all knew he was a C.I.D. man because he kept inquiring about an officer named Irving or Washington and because after his first day there he wouldn't censor letters. He found them too monotonous.

* Joseph Heller's Catch-22 was first published by Simon & Schuster in 1961. It is currently available in a Simon & Schuster Classic edition.

One of America's foremost essayists and social critics, Wendell Berry is a farmer in northeastern Kentucky and an agrarian writer in the tradition of Henry David Thoreau and Edward Abbey. In a recent interview with Thomas P. Healy (in Counterpunch, April 15/16, 2006), Berry described the "very serious cultural and economic failure" of the industrial world:

We're living at the expense of basic or primary workers, primary producers. We're living off the backs of small farmers and Central American and Mexican migrants. And all the while we're congratulating ourselves for getting over slavery. And that hasn't happened.

In the following excerpt from his essay "A Few Words for Motherhood," Berry describes the process of assisting at the birth of a calf--an experience that leaves the author "feeling instructed and awed and pleased." Berry's paratactic style, characterized by straightforward diction, is deceptively simple.



from A Few Words for Motherhood* by Wendell Berry

My wife and son and I find the heifer in a far corner of the field. In maybe two hours of labor she has managed to give birth to one small foot. We know how it has been with her. Time and again she has lain down and heaved at her burden, and got up and turned and smelled the ground. She is a heifer--how does she know that something is supposed to be there?

It takes some doing even for the three of us to get her into the barn. Her orders are to be alone, and she does all in her power to obey. But finally we shut the door behind her and get her into a stall. She isn't wild; once she is confined it isn't even necessary to tie her. I wash in a bucket of icy water and soap my right hand and forearm. She is quiet now. And so are we humans--worried, and excited, too, for if there is a chance for failure here, there is also a chance for success.

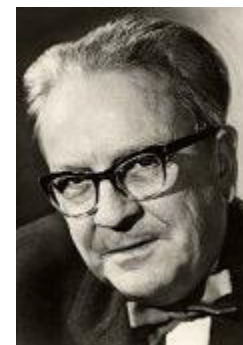
I loop a bale string onto the calf's exposed foot, knot the string short around a stick which my son then holds. I press my hand gently into the birth canal until I find the second foot and then, a little further on, a nose. I loop a string around the second foot, fasten on another stick for a handhold. And then we pull. The heifer stands and pulls against us for a few seconds, then gives up and goes down. We brace ourselves the best we can into our work, pulling as the heifer pushes. Finally the head comes, and then, more easily, the rest.

We clear the calf's nose, help him to breathe, and then, because the heifer has not yet stood up, we lay him on the bedding in front of her. And what always seems to me the miracle of it begins. She has never calved before. If she ever saw another cow calve, she paid little attention. She has, as we humans say, no education and no experience. And yet she recognizes the calf as her own, and knows what to do for it. Some heifers don't, but most do, as this one does. Even before she gets up, she begins to lick it about the nose and face with loud, vigorous swipes of her tongue. And all the while she utters a kind of moan, meant to comfort, encourage, and reassure--or so I understand it.

* "A Few Words for Motherhood" appears in the collection *The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays Cultural and Agricultural*, published by North Point Press, 1982

"The most durable thing in writing is style," said novelist Raymond Chandler, "and style is the most valuable investment a writer can make with his time." These examples of Raymond Chandler's hardboiled prose style have been drawn from the opening and closing chapters of his 1939 novel, The Big Sleep. (Note that several of Chandler's sentences have been adapted for our Exercise in Identifying Nouns.)

Compare and contrast Chandler's style with that of Ernest Hemingway in the excerpt from his story "In Another Country."



from The Big Sleep* by Raymond Chandler – Opening of Chapter One

It was about eleven o'clock in the morning, mid October, with the sun not shining and a look of hard wet rain in the clearness of the foothills. I was wearing my powder-blue suit, with dark blue shirt, tie and display handkerchief, black brogues, black wool socks with dark blue clocks on them. I was neat, clean, shaved, and sober, and I didn't care who knew it. I was everything the well-dressed private detective ought to be. I was calling on four million dollars.

The main hallway of the Sternwood Place was two stories high. Over the entrance doors, which would have let in a troop of Indian elephants, there was a broad stained-glass panel showing a knight in dark armor rescuing a lady who was tied to a tree and didn't have any clothes on but some very long and convenient hair. The knight had pushed the vizor of his helmet back to be sociable, and he was fiddling on the ropes that tied the lady to the tree and not getting anywhere. I stood there and thought that if I lived in the house, I would sooner or later have to climb up there and help him.

There were French doors at the back of the hall, beyond them a wide sweep of emerald grass to a white garage, in front of which a slim dark young chauffeur in shiny black leggings was dusting a maroon Packard convertible. Beyond the garage were some decorative trees trimmed as carefully as poodle dogs. Beyond them a large greenhouse with a domed roof. Then more trees and beyond everything the solid, uneven, comfortable line of the foothills.

On the east side of the hall, a free staircase, tile-paved, rose to a gallery with a wrought-iron railing and another piece of stained-glass romance. Large hard chairs with rounded red plush seats were backed into the vacant spaces of the wall round about. They didn't look as if anybody had ever sat in them. In the middle of the west wall there was a big empty fireplace with a brass screen in four hinged panels, and over the fireplace a marble mantel with cupids at the corners. Above the mantel there was a large oil portrait, and above the portrait two bullet-torn or moth-eaten cavalry pennants crossed in a glass frame. The portrait was a stiffly posed job of an officer in full regimentals of about the time of the Mexican war. The officer had a neat black imperial, black moustachios, hot hard coal-black eyes, and the general look of a man it would pay to get along with. I thought this might be General Sternwood's grandfather. It could hardly be the General himself, even though I had heard he was pretty far gone in years to have a couple of daughters still in the dangerous twenties.

I was still staring at the hot black eyes when a door opened far back under the stairs. It wasn't the butler coming back. It was a girl.

Chapter Thirty-Nine: Concluding Paragraphs

I went quickly away from her down the room and out and down the tiled staircase to the front hall. I didn't see anybody when I left. I found my hat alone this time. Outside, the bright gardens had a haunted look, as though small wild eyes were watching me from behind the bushes, as though the sunshine itself had a mysterious something in its light. I got into my car and drove off down the hill.

What did it matter where you lay once you were dead? In a dirty sump or in a marble tower on top of a high hill? You were dead, you were sleeping the big sleep, you were not bothered by things like that. Oil and

water were the same as wind and air to you. You just slept the big sleep, not caring about the nastiness of how you died or where you fell. Me, I was part of the nastiness now. Far more a part of it than Rusty Regan was. But the old man didn't have to be. He could lie quiet in his canopied bed, with his bloodless hands folded on the sheet, waiting. His heart was a brief, uncertain murmur. His thoughts were as gray as ashes. And in a little while he too, like Rusty Regan, would be sleeping the big sleep.

On the way downtown I stopped at a bar and had a couple of double Scotches. They didn't do me any good. All they did was make me think of Silver Wig, and I never saw her again.

NOTE: The sentences in our Exercise in Identifying Nouns were adapted from the sentences in the first three paragraphs of *The Big Sleep* by Raymond Chandler.

* Raymond Chandler's *The Big Sleep* was originally published by Alfred A. Knopf in 1939 and republished by Vintage in 1988.

*Dr. Paul Fussell, professor emeritus of English at the University of Pennsylvania, is best known for his study of the literature and mythology of World War I in *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975), which received both a National Book Award and a National Book Critics Circle Award.*

*In *Class: A Guide Through the American Status System* (1983), Fussell offers a witty analysis of class distinctions in what is often described as a "classless" society. This passage, from chapter three of the book, considers one of the more visible signs of social class: clothing and other belongings "with messages on them you're supposed to read and admire." Notice how Fussell introduces several specific examples as he explains why people "feel a need to wear legible clothing."*



Legible Clothing – from *Class* by Paul Fussell*

There are psychological reasons why proles feel a need to wear legible clothing, and they are more touching than ridiculous. By wearing a garment reading SPORTS ILLUSTRATED or GATORADE or LESTER LANIN, the prole associates himself with an enterprise the world judges successful, and thus, for the moment, he achieves some importance. This is the reason why, at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway each May, you can see grown men walking around proud to wear silly-looking caps so long as they say GOODYEAR or VALVOLINE. Brand names today possess a totemistic power to confer distinction on those who wear them. By donning legible clothing you fuse your private identity with external commercial success, redeeming your insignificance and becoming, for the moment, somebody. For \$27 you can send in to a post-office box in Holiday, Florida, and get a nylon jacket in blue, white, and orange that says, on the front, UNION 76. There are sizes for kids and ladies too. Just the thing for the picnic. And this need is not the proles' alone. Witness the T-shirts and carryalls stamped with the logo of The New York Review of Books, which convey the point "I read hard books," or printed with portraits of Mozart and Haydn and Beethoven, which assure the world, "I am civilized." The gold-plated blazer buttons displaying university seals affected by the middle class likewise identify the wearer with impressive brand names like the University of Indiana and Louisiana State.

* Source: Paul Fussell's book *Class: A Guide Through the American Status System* was published in 1983 by Summit Books, a division of Simon & Schuster, Inc. It is currently available in a paperback edition published by Touchstone (1992).

"There are certain ways of becoming attentive," British novelist Margaret Drabble said in a Paris Review interview in 1978. "Like walking. If I go for a long walk, I can think better because I don't have to worry about what I'm doing."

Thirty years later in "The Missing Piece," an essay written for The Guardian newspaper, Drabble again brought up the subject of walking--this time describing it as one of her antidotes to depression. In the opening paragraph of the essay, she includes references to various literary figures alongside examples from her own life.



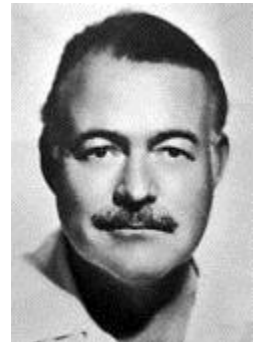
from *The Missing Piece** by Margaret Drabble

Virginia Woolf's father went in for mountaineering and public groaning, mine for gardening and a kind of tuneless humming; he also liked to walk with his dog Anna by the river Deben in Suffolk. My mother sought relief in pre-Prozac pills called Tofranil, and in novels. I take long walks and do jigsaws. (Reading doesn't do the trick so well any more, although I still read obsessively.) These are all attempts to alleviate depression. We claim we talk much more openly now about depression than we used to, and it is true that many confessional memoirs dealing with it have been published in recent years, some good (William Styron's *Darkness Visible*, Gwyneth Lewis's *Sunbathing in the Rain*), some bad, and some exploitative, but it's hardly a new topic. Melancholia has been with us for centuries, and Hamlet was not the first to have suffered from it. Tennyson feared what he called "the black blood of the Tennysons," an inheritance of mental and physical disability and drug addiction, and exorcised his demons in the intense, hypnotic and enervating melancholia of his verse. Some can harness it to their own purposes, and ride the waves. Sylvia Plath rode bravely and fearlessly for a while, yet in the end went under.

* "The Missing Piece" by Margaret Drabble was published in *The Guardian*, April 4, 2009.

*The first two paragraphs of Ernest Hemingway's short story "In Another Country" illustrate the author's effective use of repetition and polysyndeton. In *The Art of Fiction* (Viking, 1992), David Lodge notes that "repetition on this scale would probably receive a black mark in a school 'composition,'" but that Hemingway "breaks the rules" deliberately--to convey a sense of experience as it was experienced, "using simple, denotative language purged of stylistic decoration."*

Hemingway's stripped-down style has often been imitated for comic effect.



from "In Another Country"* by Ernest Hemingway

In the fall the war was always there, but we did not go to it any more. It was cold in the fall in Milan and the dark came very early. Then the electric lights came on, and it was pleasant along the streets looking in the windows. There was much game hanging outside the shops, and the snow powdered in the fur of the foxes and the wind blew their tails. The deer hung stiff and heavy and empty, and small birds blew in the wind and the wind turned their feathers. It was a cold fall and the wind came down from the mountains.

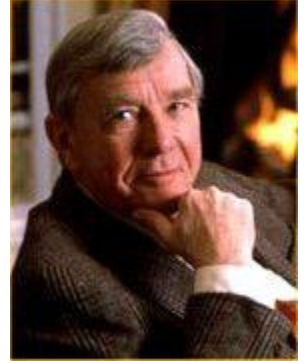
We were all at the hospital every afternoon, and there were different ways of walking across the town through the dusk to the hospital. Two of the ways were alongside canals, but they were long. Always, though, you crossed a bridge across a canal to enter the hospital. There was a choice of three bridges. On one of them a woman sold roasted chestnuts. It was warm, standing in front of her charcoal fire, and the chestnuts were warm afterward in your pocket. The hospital was very old and very beautiful, and you entered through a gate and walked across a courtyard and out a gate on the other side. There were usually funerals starting from the courtyard. Beyond the old hospital were the new brick pavilions, and there we met every afternoon and were all very polite and interested in what was the matter, and sat in the machines that were to make so much difference.

* "In Another Country" first appeared in Ernest Hemingway's short-story collection *Men Without Women* (Scribner, 1927). In 1998 it was reprinted in *The Complete Short Stories of Ernest Hemingway* (Scribner).

In this description of his high school English teacher, journalist Russell Baker relies on repetition to convey an overwhelming impression of dullness and, well, primness. The passage appears in Baker's memoir, Growing Up (1982).

Mr. Fleagle from Growing Up by Russell Baker

When our class was assigned to Mr. Fleagle for third-year English I anticipated another grim year in that dreariest of subjects. Mr. Fleagle was notorious among City students for dullness and inability to inspire. He was said to be stuffy, dull, and hopelessly out of date. To me he looked to be sixty or seventy and prim to a fault. He wore primly severe eyeglasses, his wavy hair was primly cut and primly combed. He wore primly vested suits with neckties blocked primly against the collar buttons of his primly starched white shirts. He had a primly pointed jaw, a primly straight nose, and a prim manner of speaking that was so correct, so gentlemanly, that he seemed a comic antique.



Fran Lebowitz has been called "the funniest woman in America"--and also "America's most legendarily blocked writer." Her sardonic essays from the late 1970s, now collected in The Fran Lebowitz Reader (Vintage, 1994), reflect her view of writing as "a rarefied form of a tantrum." In the following paragraph from the essay "Taking a Letter" (which first appeared in Metropolitan Life, 1978), Lebowitz offers a fresh perspective on the postal workers in her neighborhood.

The Greenwich Village Postal System by Fran Lebowitz

My neighborhood is located in Greenwich Village, a quarter of the city well known for its interesting artistic qualities. These qualities are to be found not only in its atmosphere and residents but also in its public servants. There is, in fact, not a single local postal employee who does not possess a temperament of such lush moodiness that one assumes that only an unfortunate lack of rhythm has kept them from careers devoted to the composition of tragic opera. Exhaustive research soon established that this was no accident but a carefully planned effort to bring the post office closer to those it serves. The Greenwich Village Postal System is a separate entity dedicated to the proposition that nowhere on earth are men created more equal than downtown on the West Side. Thus its offices exhibit a clean Bauhaus influence. The wanted posters refer to desires more personal than federal. Uniforms are chosen on the basis of cut and fabric. And they have punched up the official motto with the Greenwich Village Addendum so that it reads as follows: "Neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night can stay these couriers from swift completion of their appointed rounds. However, offended sensibility, painful memory, postman's block, and previous engagements may stay the courier for an indefinite period of time. C'est la vie."



"Taking a Letter" was first published in Metropolitan Life, by Fran Lebowitz (Dutton, 1978), and reprinted in The Fran Lebowitz Reader (Vintage, 1994).

Born in Glasgow, Scotland and educated at Oxford University, Gilbert Highet (1906-1978) taught Greek and Latin at Columbia University for almost 40 years. In addition, as the host of a radio program and a reviewer for the Book of the Month Club, he established a reputation as a skilled popularizer of intellectual topics.

In the following excerpt from his essay "Diogenes and Alexander," Highet offers a memorable sketch of the "doggish" Greek philosopher Diogenes, who made a virtue of extreme poverty. Highet's mix of simple, compound, and complex sentences--some short, some long--helps to put us under the spell of a master teacher.



Diogenes* by Gilbert Highet

Lying on the bare earth, shoeless, bearded, half-naked, he looked like a beggar or a lunatic. He was one, but not the other. He had opened his eyes with the sun at dawn, scratched, done his business like a dog at the roadside, washed at the public fountain, begged a piece of breakfast bread and a few olives, eaten them squatting on the ground, and washed them down with a few handfuls of water scooped from the spring. (Long ago he had owned a rough wooden cup, but he threw it away when he saw a boy drinking out of his hollowed hands.) Having no work to go to and no family to provide for, he was free. As the market place filled up with shoppers and merchants and gossipers and sharpers and slaves and foreigners, he had strolled through it for an hour or two. Everybody knew him, or knew of him. They would throw sharp questions at him and get sharper answers. Sometimes they threw jeers, and got jibes; sometimes bits of food, and got scant thanks; sometimes a mischievous pebble, and got a shower of stones and abuse. They were not quite sure whether he was mad or not. He knew they were mad, all mad, each in a different way; they amused him. Now he was back at his home.

It was not a house, not even a squatter's hut. He thought everybody lived far too elaborately, expensively, anxiously. What good is a house? No one needs privacy; natural acts are not shameful; we all do the same things, and need not hide them. No one needs beds and chairs and such furniture: the animals live healthy lives and sleep on the ground. All we require, since nature did not dress us properly, is one garment to keep us warm, and some shelter from rain and wind. So he had one blanket--to dress him in the daytime and cover him at night--and he slept in a cask. His name was Diogenes. He was the founder of the creed called Cynicism (the word means "doggishness"); he spent much of his life in the rich, lazy, corrupt Greek city of Corinth, mocking and satirizing its people, and occasionally converting one of them.

His home was not a barrel made of wood: too expensive. It was a storage jar made of earthenware, something like a modern fuel tank--no doubt discarded because a break had made it useless. He was not the first to inhabit such a thing: the refugees driven into Athens by the Spartan invasion had been forced to sleep in casks. But he was the first who ever did so by choice, out of principle.

Diogenes was not a degenerate or a maniac. He was a philosopher who wrote plays and poems and essays expounding his doctrine; he talked to those who cared to listen; he had pupils who admired him. But he taught chiefly by example. All should live naturally, he said, for what is natural is normal and cannot possibly be evil or shameful. Live without conventions, which are artificial and false; escape complexities and superfluities and extravagances: only so can you live a free life. The rich man believes he possesses his big house with its many rooms and its elaborate furniture, his pictures and expensive clothes, his horses and his servants and his bank accounts. He does not. He depends on them, he worries about them, he spends most of his life's energy looking after them; the thought of losing them makes him sick with anxiety. They possess him. He is their slave. In order to procure a quantity of false, perishable goods he has sold the only true, lasting good, his own independence.

* The essay "Diogenes and Alexander," by Gilbert Highet, was originally published in Horizon magazine, spring 1963.

The narrator of Bernard Malamud's third novel, A New Life (1961), is Sy Levin, a troubled English teacher who abandons New York City in search of renewal at a mythical college in the Pacific Northwest. In this paragraph from early in the novel, Levin relates his encounter with his first class on the opening day of the fall term. Notice the various kinds of subordination used by Malamud, in particular participial phrases and absolutes.



from *A New Life** (1961) by Bernard Malamud

Silence thickened as he talked, the attentiveness of the class surprising him, although it was a college class--that made the difference. He had expected, to tell the truth, some boredom--the teacher pushing the tide; but everyone's eyes were fastened on him. Heartened by this, his shame at having been late all but evaporated, Levin, with a dozen minutes left to the hour, finally dropped grammar to say what was still on his mind: namely, welcome to Cascadia College. He was himself a stranger in the West but that didn't matter. By some miracle of movement and change, standing before them as their English instructor by virtue of his appointment, Levin welcomed them from wherever they came: the Northwest states, California, and a few from beyond the Rockies, a thrilling representation to a man who had in all his life never been west of Jersey City. If they worked conscientiously in college, he said, they would come in time to a better understanding of who they were and what their lives might yield, education being revelation. At this they laughed, though he wasn't sure why. Still, if they could be so good-humored early in the morning it was all right with him. He noticed now that some of them turned in their seats to greet old friends; two shook hands as if to say this was the place to be. Levin grew eloquent. The men in the class--there were a few older students, veterans--listened with good-natured interest, and the girls gazed at the instructor with rosy-faced, shy affection. In his heart he thanked them, sensing he had created their welcome of him. They represented the America he had so often heard of, the fabulous friendly West. So what if he spoke with flat a's and they with rocky r's? Or he was dark and nervously animated, they blond, tending to impassive? Or if he had come from a vast metropolis of many-countried immigrants, they from towns and small cities where anyone was much like everyone? In Levin's classroom they shared ideals of seeking knowledge, one and indivisible. "This is the life for me," he admitted, and they broke into cheers, whistles, loud laughter. The bell rang and the class moved noisily into the hall, some nearly convulsed. As if inspired, Levin glanced down at his fly, and it was, as it must be, all the way open.

* Bernard Malamud's *A New Life* was first published in 1961 by Farrar, Straus and Cudahy. A new edition, with an introduction by Jonathan Lethem, was published by Farrar, Straus and Giroux in 2004.

Pulitzer Prize-winning author Annie Dillard describes herself as "a poet and a walker with a background in theology and a penchant for quirky facts." In her essay "Mirages," from the collection Teaching a Stone to Talk (Harper, 1982), Dillard describes the summer mirages that "mince and maul the islands and waters" in Puget Sound in the Pacific Northwest of the U.S.

This short passage from "Mirages" illustrates Dillard's characteristic verbal style--a sentence style based on dynamic verbs. As Richard Lanham points out in Analyzing Prose (Continuum, 2003), "The verb style wants to move fast."



from "Mirages"* by Annie Dillard

In winter there is nobody, nothing. If you see a human figure, or a boat on the water, you grab binoculars.

But in summer everything fills. The day itself widens and stretches almost around the clock; these are very high latitudes, higher than Labrador's. You want to run all night. Summer people move into the houses that had stood empty, unseen, and unnoticed all winter. The gulls scream all day and smash cockles; by August they are bringing the kids. Volleyball games resume on the sand flat; someone fires up the sauna; in the long dusk, at eleven o'clock, half a dozen beach fires people the shore. The bay fills up with moored boats and the waters beyond fill with pleasure craft, hundreds of cruisers and sailboats and speedboats. The wind dies and stays dead, and these fierce waters, which in winter feel the strongest windstorms in the country, become suddenly like a resort lake, some tame dammed reservoir, the plaything of any man-jack with a motor and a hull. Surely this is mirage. The heat is on, and the light is on, and someone is pouring drinks. On the beach we dip freshly dug clams from their shells. We play catch or sail a dinghy or holler; we have sand in our hair, calluses on our feet, hot brown skin on our arms. This is the life of the senses, the life of pleasures. It is mirage on the half shell. It vanishes like any fun, and the empty winds resume.

* "Mirages" by Annie Dillard appears in her essay collection *Teaching a Stone to Talk: Expeditions and Encounters* (Harper & Row, 1982). A revised edition of *Teaching a Stone to Talk* was published by Harper Perennial in 1988.

Canadian-born American writer Saul Bellow was one of the most accomplished novelists of the second half of the 20th century. He received the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1976 and the National Medal of Arts in 1988. His novel Humboldt's Gift was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1976.

The subject of Bellow's Romanes Lecture (delivered at Oxford University in 1990), "The Distracted Public," is "the contemporary crisis" of distraction--the "hostile condition (massive and worldwide)" that writers and other artists "are called upon to overcome." In these two paragraphs from the end of the lecture, Bellow explains how the writer's voice can rise above "the moronic inferno" and bring us to attention.



from *The Distracted Public** by Saul Bellow (1915-2005)

If the remission of pain is happiness, then the emergence from distraction is aesthetic bliss. I use these terms loosely, for I am not making an argument but rather attempting to describe the pleasure that comes from recognition or rediscovery of certain essences permanently associated with human life. These essences are restored to our consciousness by persons who are described as artists. I shall speak here of artists who write novels and stories, since I understand them better than poets or dramatists. When you open a novel--and I mean of course the real thing--you enter into a state of intimacy with its writer. You hear a voice or, more significantly, an individual tone under the words. This tone you, the reader, will identify not so much by a name, the name of the author, as by a distinct and unique human quality. It seems to issue from the bosom, from a place beneath the breastbone. It is more musical than verbal, and it is the characteristic signature of a person, of a soul. Such a writer has power over distraction and fragmentation, and out of distressing unrest, even from the edge of chaos, he can bring unity and carry us into a state of intransitive attention. People hunger for this. The source of their hunger is found in the aforementioned essences. In our times, those essences are forced to endure strange torments and privations. There are moments when they appear to be lost beyond recovery. But then we hear or read something that exhumes them, even gives them a soiled, tattered resurrection. The proof of this is quite simple, and everyone will recognize it as once. A small cue will suffice to remind us that when we hear certain words--"all is but toys," "absent thee from felicity," "a wilderness of monkeys," "green pastures," "still waters," or even the single word "relume"--they revive for us moments of emotional completeness and overflowing comprehension, they unearth buried essences. Our present experience of anarchy does not destroy this knowledge of essences, for somehow we find ways to maintain an equilibrium between these contradictories, and others as well.

But this is why the artist competes with other claimants to attention. He cannot compete in the athletic sense of the word, as if his objects were to drive his rivals from the field. He will never win a clear victory. Nothing will ever be clear; the elements are too mixed for that. The opposing powers are too great to overcome. They are the powers of an electrified world and of a transformation of human life the outcome of which cannot be foreseen.

* Saul Bellow delivered "The Distracted Public" as a Romanes Lecture at Oxford University on May 10, 1990. The lecture was published in *It All Adds Up: From the Dim Past to the Uncertain Future*, by Saul Bellow (Viking Penguin, 1994).

Rhetorical Terms/Devices

Figurative language is the generic term for any artful deviation from the ordinary mode of speaking or writing. It is what makes up a writer's **style** – how he or she uses language. The general thinking is that we are more likely to be persuaded by rhetoric that is interesting, even artful, rather than mundane. When John F. Kennedy said, “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country” (an example of *anastrophe*), it was more interesting – and more persuasive – than the simpler, “Don't be selfish.” Indeed, politicians and pundits use these devices to achieve their desired effect on the reader or listener nearly every time they speak. The **stylistic elements** in a piece of writing work to produce a desired **effect** related to the text's (and author's) **purpose**, and thus reveals the **rhetorical situation**.

In classical rhetoric, figures of speech are divided into two main groups:

Schemes — Deviation from the ordinary pattern or arrangement of words (transference of order).

Tropes — Deviation from the ordinary and principal meaning of a word (transference of meaning).

**Important Note: Words marked with an asterisk* are words for which it would be impossible for you to write 3 examples for your weekly vocabulary assignment. In those cases, please write only the definition, in your own words, and the rhetorical uses/effect of that device, or do what you are instructed to do under those words. Please mark these words that deviate from the ordinary assignment with an asterisk* when you type them on your page.*

COMMON SCHEMES — *Deviation from the ordinary pattern or arrangement of words (transference of order).*

Schemes of Construction — Schemes of Balance

1. Parallelism — **similarity of structure in a pair or series of related words, phrases, or clauses.** This basic principle of grammar and rhetoric demands that equivalent things be set forth in coordinate grammatical structures: nouns with nouns, prepositional phrases with prepositional phrases, adverb clauses with adverb clauses, etc.

- a. “...for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other *our* Lives, *our* Fortunes, and *our* sacred Honor” (The Declaration of Independence)
- b. "We have seen the state of our Union in the endurance of rescuers, working past exhaustion. We've seen the *unfurling* of flags, the *lighting* of candles, the *giving* of blood, the *saying* of prayers -- in English, Hebrew, and Arabic." (George W. Bush, 9-20-01 Address to the Nation on Terrorism)
- c. “So Janey waited *a bloom time*, and *a green time* and *an orange time*.” (Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*)
- d. “It will be long before our larger life interprets itself in *such* imagination as Hawthorne's, *such* wisdom as Emerson's, *such* poetry as Longfellow's, *such* prophesy as Whittier's, *such* grace as Holmes's, *such* humor and humanity as Lowell's.” (William Dean Howells)

2. Isocolon is a scheme of parallel structure that occurs when the parallel elements are similar not only in grammatical structure but also in length (number of words or even number of syllables). This is very effective, but a little goes a long way.

- a. “His purpose was *to impress* the ignorant, *to perplex* the dubious, *and to confound* the scrupulous.”

- b. “An *envious* heart makes a *treacherous* ear.” (Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*)

3. Antithesis — the juxtaposition of contrasting ideas, often in parallel structure. The contrast may be in words or in ideas or both. When used well, antithesis can be very effective, even witty.

- a. “What if I am rich, and another is poor—strong, and he is weak—intelligent, and he is benighted—elevated, and he is depraved? Have we not one Father? Hath not one God created us?” (William Lloyd Garrison, “No Compromise with Slavery”)
- b. “Your forefathers crossed the great water and landed on this island. Their numbers were small. They found friends and not enemies. They told us they had fled from their own country for fear of wicked men, and had come here to enjoy their religion. They asked for a small seat. We took pity on them, granted their request; and they sat down amongst us. We gave them corn and meat; they gave us poison in return.” (Red Jacket, 1805)
- c. “Though studious, he was popular; though argumentative, he was modest; though inflexible, he was candid; and though metaphysical, yet orthodox.” (Samuel Johnson).
- d. It is the best of times, yet the worst of times: we live in unparalleled prosperity, yet have starvation; modern science can perform miracles to save lives, yet we have war; we balance ourselves delicately on the moon, yet destroy the delicate balance on the earth. Young people search for meaning in life, yet are confused, demoralized, frustrated.” (Jesse E. Hobson, article from America)

Schemes of unusual or inverted word order

4. Anastrophe (an-ASS-tra-fee) — the inversion of natural word order, often with the purpose of surprising the reader, gaining attention, or (most often) emphasizing certain words (those at the beginning and the end of the sentence). It is most effective if the author rarely writes awkwardly, because when set among well-structured sentences it emphasizes the inverted phrase.

- a. “Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” (John F. Kennedy, Inaugural speech)
- b. I go, so far as the immediate moment was concerned, away.” (Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw*)
- c. “One ad does not a survey make.” (caption from an ad for Peugeot automobiles)

5. Parenthesis — insertion of some verbal unit in a position that interrupts the normal syntactical flow of the sentence, thereby sending the thought off on an important tangent that has pronounced rhetorical effect. Often involves literal parentheses (), but not always; there are other ways to insert a comment into a sentence. One might use commas, or dashes, for example. The parenthetical remark, however, is off on a tangent, cut off from the thrust of the sentence and grammatically unrelated to the sentence.

- a. “Those two spots are among the darkest of our whole civilization—pardon me, our whole *culture* (an important distinction, I’ve heard), which might sound like a hoax, or a contradiction, but that (by contradiction, I mean) is how the world moves: not like an arrow, but a boomerang.” (Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*)
- b. “And they went further and further from her, being attached to her by a thin thread (since they had lunched with her) which would stretch and stretch, get thinner and thinner as they walked across London; as if one’s friends were attached to one’s body, after lunching with them, by a thin thread, which (as she dozed there) became hazy with the sound of bells, striking the hour or ringing to service, as a single spider’s thread is blotted with rain-drops, and burdened, sags down. So she slept.”—Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
- c. “He said he supervised ten editors—another euphemism—in his department, which clears 90% of NBC’s entertainment programming...” (Joan Barthel, in *Life* magazine, August 1969)

- d. "There is even, and it is the achievement of this book, a curious sense of happiness running through its paragraphs." (Norman Mailer, book review)

Schemes of Omission

6. Ellipsis - deliberate omission of a word or of words that are readily implied by the context and must be supplied by the reader or listener. While this can make clear, economical sentences, if the understood words are grammatically incompatible, the resulting sentence may be awkward.

- a. "So singularly clear was the water that when it was only twenty or thirty feet deep the bottom seemed floating on the air! Yes, where it was even *eighty* feet deep. Every little pebble was distinct, every speckled trout, every hand's breadth of sand." (Mark Twain, *Roughing It*)
- b. "And he to England shall along with you." (Shakespeare, *Hamlet* III,iii)
- c. "Twenty-two years old, weak, hot, frightened, not daring to acknowledge the fact that he didn't know who or what he was...with no past, no language, no tribe, no source, no address book, no comb, no pencil, no clock, no pocket handkerchief, no rug, no bed, no can opener, no faded postcard, no soap, no key, no tobacco pouch, no soiled underwear and nothing nothing nothing to do...he was sure of one thing only: the unchecked monstrosity of his hands." (Toni Morrison, *Sula*)

7. Asyndeton (a SIN da ton) — deliberate omission of conjunctions between a series of words, phrases, or clauses. The effects of this device are to emphasize each clause and to produce a punctuated rhythm in the sentence.

- a. "I came, I saw, I conquered." (Julius Caesar)
- b. "Dogs, undistinguishable in mire. Horses, scarcely better--splashed to their very blinkers. Foot passengers, jostling one another's umbrellas, in a general infection of ill temper" (Charles Dickens, *Bleak House*)
- c. "...that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty. " (John F. Kennedy)

8. Polysyndeton — deliberate use of many conjunctions (does not involve omission, but is grouped with its opposite, asyndeton). The effect of polysyndeton is to speed up or add a frenetic quality to the rhythm of the sentence.

- a. "I said, 'Who killed him?' and he said, 'I don't know who killed him but he's dead all right,' and it was dark and there was water standing in the street and no lights and windows broke and boats all up in the town and trees blown down and everything all blown and I got a skiff and went out and found my boat where I had her inside Mango Key and she was all right only she was full of water." (Ernest Hemingway, "After the Storm")
- b. "On and on she went, across Piccadilly, and up Regent Street, ahead of him, her cloak, her gloves, her shoulders combining with the fringes and the laces and the feather boas in the windows to make the spirit of finery and whimsy which dwindled out of the shops on to the pavement, as the light of a lamp goes wavering at night over hedges in the darkness." (Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*)
- c. "We lived and laughed and loved and left." (James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*)

Schemes of Repetition

9. Alliteration — repetition of initial or medial consonants in two or more adjacent words. Used sparingly, alliteration provides emphasis. Overused, it sounds silly.

- a. "Somewhere at this very moment a child is being born in America. Let it be our cause to give that child a **happy** home, a **healthy** family, and a **hopeful** future." (Bill Clinton, 1992 DNC Acceptance Address)
- b. "It was the **meanest** **moment** of eternity". (Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*)
- c. "**G**uinness is **g**ood for you." (advertisement)
- d. "My style is **p**ublic negotiations for **p**arity, rather than **p**riate negotiations for **p**osition." (Jesse Jackson)

10. Assonance - the repetition of similar vowel sounds, preceded and followed by different consonants, in the stressed syllables of adjacent words.

- a. "Whales in the **w**ake like **c**apes and Alps/ **Q**uaked the sick sea and snouted deep."
(Dylan Thomas, "Ballad of the Long Legged Bait")
- b. "Refresh your **z**est for living." (advertisement for French Line Ships)
- c. "Strips of **t**in foil **w**inking like people." (Sylvia Plath)
- d. "The gloves didn't **f**it. If it doesn't **f**it, you must **a**cquit." (Johnny Cochran, O.J.Simpson trial)

11. Anaphora — repetition of the same word or groups of words at the beginnings of successive phrases.

This device produces a strong emotional effect, especially in speech. It also establishes a marked change in rhythm.

- a. "We shall not flag or fail. We shall go on to the end. We shall fight in France, we shall fight on the seas and oceans, we shall fight with growing confidence and growing strength in the air, we shall defend our island . . . we shall never surrender." (Winston Churchill, 1940)
- b. "Why should white people be running all the stores in our community? Why should white people be running the banks of our community? Why should the economy of our community be in the hands of the white man? Why?" (Malcolm X)
- c. "Yesterday, the Japanese government also launched an attack against Malaya. Last night, Japanese forces attacked Hong Kong. Last night, Japanese forces attacked Guam. Last night, Japanese forces attacked the Philippine Islands. Last night, the Japanese attacked Wake Island. And this morning, the Japanese attacked Midway Island." (Franklin Roosevelt, Pearl Harbor Address)

12. Epistrophe — repetition of the same word or group of words at the ends of successive phrases. Like anaphora, epistrophe produces a strong rhythm and emphasis.

- a. "But to all of those who would be tempted by weakness, let us leave no doubt that we will be as strong as we need to be for as long as we need to be." ([Richard Nixon, First Inaugural Address](#))
- b. "...and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."
(Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address)
- c. "As long as the white man sent you to Korea, you bled. He sent you to Germany, you bled. He sent you to the South Pacific to fight the Japanese, you bled." (Speech by Malcolm X)
- d. "In a cake, nothing tastes like real butter, nothing moistens like real butter, nothing enriches like real butter, nothing satisfies like real butter." (Caption from a Pillsbury ad)

13. Epanalepsis (eh-puh-nuh-LEAP-siss) — repetition of the same word or words at both beginning and ending of a phrase, clause, or sentence. Like other schemes of repetition, epanalepsis often produces or expresses strong emotion.

- a. Blood hath bought blood, and blows have answer'd blows:/ Strength match'd with strength, and power confronted power. (William Shakespeare, *King John*)
- b. "Nothing is worse than doing nothing."
- c. "A minimum wage that is not a livable wage can never be a minimum wage." (Ralph Nader)

14. Anadiplosis (an-uh-dih-PLO-sis) — repetition of the last word of one clause at the beginning of the following clause.

- a. "The crime was common, common be the pain". (Alexander Pope, "Eloise to Abelard")
- b. "Aboard my ship, excellent performance is standard. Standard performance is sub-standard. Sub-standard performance is not permitted to exist." (Captain Queeg, Herman Wouk's *The Caine Mutiny*)
- c. "Somehow, with the benefit of little formal education, my grandparents recognized the inexorable downward spiral of conduct outside the guardrails: If you lie, you will cheat; if you cheat, you will steal; if you steal, you will kill." (Justice Clarence Thomas, 1993 Mercer Law School Address)
- d. "They call for you: The general who became a slave; the slave who became a gladiator; the gladiator who defied an Emperor. Striking story." (line delivered by Joaquin Phoenix, from the movie *Gladiator*)

15. Climax — arrangement of words, phrases, or clauses in an order of increasing importance.

- a. "More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to use." (St. Paul, *Romans*)
- b. "And from the crew of Apollo 8, we close with good night, good luck, a merry Christmas, and God bless all of you, all of you on the good earth." (Frank Borman, astronaut)
- c. "Miss America was not so much interested in serving herself as she was eager to serve her family, her community, and her nation."

16. Antimetabole (an-tee-meh-TA-boe-lee) — repetition of words, in successive clauses, in reverse grammatical order.

- a. "One should eat to live, not live to eat." (Moliere, *L'Avare*)
- b. "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country." (John F. Kennedy, Inaugural Address)
- c. "The Negro needs the white man to free him from his fears. The white man needs the Negro to free him from his guilt." (Martin Luther King, Jr., from a speech delivered in 1966)
- d. "The absence of evidence is not the evidence of absence." (Carl Sagan)

17. Chiasmus (ki-AS-mus) – (the "criss-cross") — reversal of grammatical structures in successive phrases or clauses. Chiasmus is similar to antimetabole in that it too involves a reversal of grammatical structures in successive phrases or clauses, but it is unlike antimetabole in that it does not involve a repetition of words. Both chiasmus and antimetabole can be used to reinforce antithesis.

- a. "Exalts his enemies, his friends destroys." (John Dryden, "Absalom and Achitophel")
- b. "It is boring to eat; to sleep is fulfilling."

18. Polyptoton (po-lyp-TO-ton) — repetition of words derived from the same root.

- a. "But in this desert country they may see the land being rendered useless by overuse." (Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Voice of the Desert*)
- b. "We would like to contain the uncontainable future in a glass." (Loren Eiseley, from an article in *Harper's*, March 1964)
- c. "With eager feeding food doth choke the feeder." (Shakespeare's *Richard II* 2.1.37)
- d. "Let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." (Franklin Roosevelt, First Inaugural Address, March 1933)

COMMON TROPES — Deviation from the ordinary and principal meaning of a word (transference of meaning).

19. Metaphor - implied comparison between two things of unlike nature

- a. "The symbol of all our aspirations, one of the student leaders called her: the fruit of our struggle." (John Simpson, "Tianamen Square")
- b. "A breeze blew through the room, blue curtains in at one end and out the other...twisting them up toward the frosted wedding-cake of a ceiling, and then rippled over the wine-colored rug, making a shadow on it....
—F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Great Gatsby*
- c. "With this faith we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood." (Martin Luther King, *I Have a Dream*)

20. Simile - explicit comparison between two things of unlike nature, usually using "like" or "as"

- a. "The night is bleeding like a cut." (Bono)
- b. "Ah my!" said Eustacia, with a laugh which unclosed her lips so that the sun shone into her mouth as into a tulip and lent it a similar scarlet fire." (Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native*)

21. Synecdoche (suh-NECK-duh-kee) — figure of speech in which a part stands for the whole

- a. "I have nothing to offer but blood, toil, tears, and sweat." (Winston Churchill, 1940)
- b. "In Europe, we gave the cold shoulder to De Gaulle, and now he gives the warm hand to Mao Tse-tung."
(Richard Nixon, 1960)
- c. "Give us this day our daily bread." (Matthew, 6:11)

22. Metonymy (me-TON-y-my) – substitution of some attributive or suggestive word for what is actually meant.

- a. The British crown has been plagued by scandal.
- b. There is no word from the Pentagon on the new rumors from Afghanistan.
- c. The pen is mightier than the sword.

23. Antanaclasis (AN-ta-na-CLA-sis) – repetition of a word or phrase whose meaning changes in the second instance. These are often "puns" as well.

- a. "Your argument is sound, nothing but sound." (Benjamin Franklin)
- b. "If we don't hang together, we'll hang separately." (Benjamin Franklin)
- c. "If you aren't fired with enthusiasm, you will be fired with enthusiasm." (Vince Lombardi)

24. Personification — investing abstractions or inanimate objects with human qualities

- a. "The night comes crawling in on all fours." (David Lowery)
- b. "Once again, the heart of America is heavy. The spirit of America weeps for a tragedy that denies the very meaning of our land." (Lyndon Baines Johnson)

25. Hyperbole — the use of exaggerated terms for the purpose of emphasis or heightened effect.

- a. "It rained for four years, eleven months, and two days." (Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*)
- b. "We walked along a road in Cumberland and stooped, because the sky hung so low." (Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward, Angel*)

26. Litotes (LI-tuh-tees OR lie-TOE-tees) — deliberate use of understatement

- a. "Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her appearance for the worse." (Jonathan Swift, *A Tale of a Tub*)
- b. "It isn't very serious. I have this tiny little tumor on the brain." (*Catcher in the Rye*)
- c. "For four generations we've been making medicines as if people's lives depended on them." (*Ad for Eli Lilly Drug Company*)

27. Rhetorical question - asking a question, not for the purpose of eliciting an answer but to assert or deny an answer implicitly

- a. "Isn't it interesting that this person to whom you set on your knees in your most private sessions at night and you pray, doesn't even look like you?" (Malcolm X)
- b. "Can anyone look at our reduced standing in the world today and say, 'Let's have four more years of this'?" (Ronald Reagan, 1980 RNC Acceptance Address)
- c. "Sir, at long last, have you left no sense of decency?" (Joseph Welch, The Army-McCarthy Hearings)

***28. Irony — use of a word in such a way as to convey a meaning opposite to the literal meaning of the word**

- a. "This plan means that one generation pays for another. Now that's just dandy." (Huey P. Long)
- b. "By Spring, if God was good, all the proud privileges of trench lice, mustard gas, spattered brains, punctured lungs, ripped guts, asphyxiation, mud and gangrene might be his." (Thomas Wolfe, *Look Homeward Angel*)
 - (1) *verbal irony* – when the words literally state the opposite of the writer's (or speaker's) meaning
 - (2) *situational irony* – when events turn out the opposite of what was expected; when what the characters and readers think ought to happen is not what does happen
 - (3) *dramatic irony* – when facts or events are unknown to a character in a play or piece of fiction but known to the reader, audience, or other characters in the work.

29. Onomatopoeia — use of words whose sound echoes the sense

- a. "Snap, crackle, pop!" (Rice Krispies commercial)
- b. "...From the clamor and the clangor of the bells!" (Edgar Allan Poe, "The Bells")

30. Oxymoron — the joining of two terms which are ordinarily contradictory

- a. "The unheard sounds came through, each melodic line existed of itself, stood out clearly from all the rest, said its piece, and waiting patiently for the other voices to speak." --Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*
- b. "*cruel kindness*"; "*visible darkness*"

31. Paradox — an apparently contradictory statement that nevertheless contains a measure of truth

- a. "And yet, it was a strangely satisfying experience for an invisible man to hear the silence of sound." (Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*)
- b. "Art is a form of lying in order to tell the truth." (Pablo Picasso)
- c. "Whoever loses his life, shall find it." (*Matthew*, 16:25)

Other Literary Analysis Terms useful for the AP English Language Test

***32. allegory** – The device of using character and/or story elements symbolically to represent an abstraction in addition to the literal meaning. In some allegories, for example, an author may intend the characters to personify an abstraction like hope or freedom. The allegorical meaning usually deals with moral truth or a generalization about human existence. Example: Orwell's *Animal Farm* is an allegory on the brutality and dishonesty of the Soviet communist system.

33. allusion – A direct or indirect reference to something which is presumably commonly known, such as an event, book, myth, place, or work of art. Allusions can be historical, literary, religious, topical, or mythical. There are many more possibilities, and a work may simultaneously use multiple layers of allusion. Example: *He was destined to fail; he always flew too close to the sun.* (An allusion to the Greek myth *Icarus*.)

- 34. analogy** – A similarity or comparison between two different things or the relationship between them. An analogy can explain something unfamiliar by associating it with or pointing out its similarity to something more familiar. Analogies can also make writing more vivid, imaginative, or intellectually engaging. Example: *Getting politicians to agree is like herding cats.*” (Beware the logical fallacy of the *false* or *weak* analogy, in which the two things being compared are so dissimilar the comparison makes little sense or becomes absurd. Example: *Voting against affirmative action is like voting for slavery.*)
- 35. antecedent** – The word, phrase, or clause referred to by a pronoun. The AP language exam occasionally asks for the antecedent of a given pronoun in a long, complex sentence or in a group of sentences. A question from the 2001 AP test as an example follows:
 “But **it** is the grandeur of all truth which can occupy a very high place in human interests that it is never absolutely novel to the meanest of minds; **it** exists eternally, by way of germ of latent principle, in the lowest as in the highest, needing to be developed but never to be planted.”
 The antecedent of “it” (bolded) is...? [answer: “all truth”]
- 36. aphorism** – A terse statement of known authorship which expresses a general truth or a moral principle. (If the authorship is unknown, the statement is generally considered to be a folk *proverb*.) An aphorism can be a memorable summation of the author’s point. “*A lie told often enough becomes the truth.*” ~ Vladimir Lenin
 (Note: For vocabulary assignment you may use aphorisms that are not your own work.)
- 37. atmosphere** – The emotional nod created by the entirety of a literary work, established partly by the setting and partly by the author’s choice of objects that are described. Even such elements as a description of the weather can contribute to the atmosphere. Frequently atmosphere foreshadows events. Perhaps it can create a mood.
- 38. caricature** – A verbal description, the purpose of which is to exaggerate or distort, for comic effect or ridicule, a person’s distinctive physical features or other characteristics.
- 39. clause** – A grammatical unit that contains both a subject and a verb. An independent, or main, clause expresses a complete thought and can stand alone as a sentence. A dependent, or subordinate clause, cannot stand alone as a sentence and must be accompanied by an independent clause. The point that you want to consider is the question of what or why the author subordinates one element, and you should also become aware of making effective use of subordination in your own writing.
- 40. colloquial/colloquialism** – The use of slang or informalities in speech or writing. Not generally acceptable for formal writing, colloquialisms give a work a conversational, familiar tone. Colloquial expressions in writing include local or regional dialects.
- *41. conceit** – A fanciful expression, usually in the form of an extended metaphor or surprising analogy between seemingly dissimilar objects, usually used in poetry. A conceit displays intellectual cleverness as a result of the unusual comparison being made, as in Shakespeare’s Sonnet 18: *Shall I compare thee to a summer’s day?/Thou art more lovely and more temperate.*”
- *42. diction** — Related to style, diction refers to the writer’s word choices, especially with regard to their correctness, clearness, or effectiveness. For the AP exam, you should be able to describe an author’s diction (for example, formal or informal, ornate or plain) and understand the ways in which diction can complement the

author's purpose. Diction, combined with syntax, figurative language, literary devices, etc., creates an author's style.

Denotation — The strict, literal, dictionary definition of a word, devoid of any emotion, attitude, or color. (Example: the denotation of a knife would be a utensil used to cut)

Connotation — The non-literal, associative meaning of a word; the implied, suggested meaning. Connotations may involve ideas, emotions, or attitudes (the connotation of a knife might be fear, violence, anger, foreboding, etc.)

(Note: You do not have to provide examples of diction for the vocabulary assignment, but please provide examples of words known to have a connotation different than their denotation, and explain).

- *43. **ethos** — In writing and speaking, a persuasive appeal to the audience based on the credibility, good character, etc., of the speaker/writer.
- 44. **euphemism** – From the Greek for “good speech,” euphemisms are a more agreeable or less offensive substitute for a generally unpleasant word or concept. The euphemism may be used to adhere to standards of social or political correctness or to add humor or ironic understatement. Saying “earthly remains” rather than “corpse” is an example of euphemism.
- *45. **extended metaphor** – A metaphor developed at great length, occurring frequently in or throughout a work.
- *46. **generic conventions** – This term describes traditions for each genre. These conventions help to define each genre; for example, they differentiate an essay and journalistic writing or an autobiography and political writing. On the AP language exam, try to distinguish the unique features of a writer's work from those dictated by convention for that genre.
- *47. **homily** – This term literally means “sermon,” but more informally, it can include any serious talk, speech, or lecture involving moral or spiritual advice. (One could say, “The President delivered a homily to the American people last night.”)
- *48. **Imagery** — The sensory details or figurative language used to describe, arouse emotion, or represent abstractions. On a physical level, imagery uses terms related to the five senses: visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory. On a broader and deeper level, however, one image can represent more than one thing. For example, a rose may present visual imagery while also representing the color in a woman's cheeks and/or symbolizing some degree of perfection. An author may use complex imagery while simultaneously employing other figures of speech, especially metaphor and simile. In addition, this term can apply to the total of all the images in a work. On the AP language exam, pay attention to how an author creates imagery and to the effect of this imagery.
- *49. **Inference/infer** – To draw a reasonable conclusion from the information presented. When a multiple choice question asks for an inference to be drawn from a passage, the most direct, most reasonable inference is the safest answer choice. If an inference is implausible, it's unlikely to be the correct answer..
- *50. **invective** – An emotionally violent, verbal denunciation or attack using strong, abusive language. (For example, in *Henry IV*, Part I, Prince Hal calls the large character of Falstaff “this sanguine coward, this bedpresser, this horseback breaker, this huge hill of flesh.”)

***51. logos** — In writing and speaking, a persuasive appeal to the audience based on logic and reason.

52. loose sentence/non-periodic sentence – A type of sentence in which the main idea (independent clause) comes first, followed by dependent grammatical units such as phrases and clauses. If a period were placed at the end of the independent clause, the clause would be a complete sentence. A work containing many loose sentences often seems informal, relaxed, or conversational. Generally, loose sentences create loose style.

The opposite of a loose sentence is the periodic sentence.

Example: I arrived at the San Diego airport after a long, bumpy ride and multiple delays.

Could stop at: I arrived at the San Diego airport

***53. mood** – The prevailing atmosphere or emotional aura of a work. Setting, tone, and events can affect the mood. Mood is similar to tone and atmosphere.

***54. narrative** – The telling of a story or an account of an event or series of events. In political speech, also used to suggest the “story-line” a politician wants people to hear: “The President tried to push a *narrative* that he was raising taxes to help people.”

***55. parody** – A work that closely imitates the style or content of another with the specific aim of comic effect and/or ridicule. It exploits peculiarities of an author’s expression (propensity to use too many parentheses, certain favorite words, etc.). Well-written parody offers enlightenment about the original, but poorly written parody offers only ineffectual imitation. Usually an audience must grasp literary allusion and understand the work being parodied in order to fully appreciate the nuances of the newer work. Occasionally, however, parodies take on a life of their own and don’t require knowledge of the original.

***56. pathos** — In writing and speaking, a persuasive appeal to the audience based on emotion.

57. pedantic – An adjective that describes words, phrases, or general tone that is overly scholarly, academic, or bookish (language that might be described as “show-offy”; using big words for the sake of using big words).

***58. prose** – One of the major divisions of genre, prose refers to fiction and nonfiction, including all its forms. In prose the printer determines the length of the line; in poetry, the poet determines the length of the line.

59. point of view – In literature, the perspective from which a story is told. There are two general divisions of point of view, and many subdivisions within those.

(1) *first person narrator* tells the story with the first person pronoun, “I,” and is a character in the story. This narrator can be the protagonist, a secondary character, or an observing character.

(2) *third person narrator* relates the events with the third person pronouns, “he,” “she,” and “it.”

There are two main subdivisions to be aware of:

a. *third person omniscient*, in which the narrator, with godlike knowledge, presents the thoughts and actions of any or all characters.

b. *third person limited omniscient*, in which the narrator presents the feelings and thoughts of only one character, presenting only the actions of all the remaining characters.

In addition, be aware that the term point of view carries an additional meaning. When you are asked to analyze the author’s point of view, the appropriate point for you to address is the author’s attitude.

(Note: For vocabulary assignment, write three sentences demonstrating different points of view, and identify the point of view).

- *60. repetition** – The duplication, either exact or approximate, of any element of language, such as a sound, word, phrase, clause, sentence, or grammatical pattern.
- *61. rhetoric** – From the Greek for “orator,” this term describes the principles governing the art of writing effectively, eloquently, and persuasively.
- *62. rhetorical modes** – This flexible term describes the variety, the conventions, and the purposes of the major kinds of writing. The four most common rhetorical modes (often referred to as “modes of discourse”) are as follows:
- (1) The purpose of *exposition* (or expository writing) is to explain and analyze information by presenting an idea, relevant evidence, and appropriate discussion. The AP language exam essay questions are frequently expository topics.
 - (2) The purpose of *argumentation* is to prove the validity of an idea, or point of view, by presenting sound reasoning, discussion, and argument that thoroughly convince the reader. Persuasive writing is a type of argumentation having an additional aim of urging some form of action.
 - (3) The purpose of *description* is to recreate, invent, or visually present a person, place, event or action so that the reader can picture that being described. Sometimes an author engages all five senses in description; good descriptive writing can be sensuous and picturesque. Descriptive writing may be straightforward and objective or highly emotional and subjective.
 - (4) The purpose of *narration* is to tell a story or narrate an event or series of events. This writing mode frequently uses the tools of descriptive writing.
- 63. sarcasm** – From the Greek meaning “to tear flesh,” sarcasm involves bitter, caustic language that is meant to hurt or ridicule someone or something. It may use irony as a device, but not all ironic statements are sarcastic (that is, intended to ridicule). When well done, sarcasm can be witty and insightful; when poorly done, it is simply cruel.
- *64. satire** – A work that targets human vices and follies or social institutions and conventions for reform or ridicule. Regardless of whether or not the work aims to reform human behavior, satire is best seen as a style of writing rather than a purpose for writing. It can be recognized by the many devices used effectively by the satirist: irony, wit, parody, caricature, hyperbole, understatement, and sarcasm. The effects of satire are varied, depending on the writer’s goal, but good satire, often humorous, is thought provoking and insightful about the human condition.
- *65. semantics** – The branch of linguistics that studies the meaning of words, their historical and psychological development, their connotations, and their relation to one another.
- *66. style** – The consideration of style has two purposes:
- (1) An evaluation of the sum of the choices an author makes in blending diction, syntax, figurative language, and other literary devices. Some authors’ styles are so idiosyncratic that we can quickly recognize works by the same author. We can analyze and describe an author’s personal style and make judgments on how appropriate it is to the author’s purpose. Styles can be called flowery, explicit, succinct, rambling, bombastic, commonplace, incisive, laconic, etc.
 - (2) Classification of authors to a group and comparison of an author to similar authors. By means of such classification and comparison, we can see how an author’s style reflects and helps to define a historical period, such as the Renaissance or the Victorian period, or a literary movement, such as the romantic, transcendental, or realist movements.

67. subject complement – The word (with any accompanying phrases) or clause that follows a linking verb and complements, or completes, the subject of the sentence by either (1) renaming it (the predicate nominative) or (2) describing it (the predicate adjective). These are defined below:

(1) *the predicate nominative* – a noun, group of nouns, or noun clause that renames the subject. It, like the predicate adjective, follows a linking verb and is located in the predicate of the sentence.

Example: Julia Roberts is a movie star.

movie star = predicate nominative, as it renames the subject, Julia Roberts

(2) *the predicate adjective* -- an adjective, a group of adjectives, or adjective clause that follows a linking verb. It is in the predicate of the sentence, and modifies, or describes, the subject.

Example: Warren remained optimistic.

optimistic = predicate adjective, as it modifies the subject, Warren.

68. subordinate clause – Like all clauses, this word group contains both a subject and a verb (plus any accompanying phrases or modifiers), but unlike the independent clause, the subordinate clause cannot stand alone; it does not express a complete thought. Also called a dependent clause, the subordinate clause depends on a main clause (or independent clause) to complete its meaning. Easily recognized key words and phrases usually begin these clauses. For example: *although, because, unless, if, even though, since, as soon as, while, who, when, where, how and that.*

Example: Yellowstone is a national park in the West *that is known for its geysers.*

italicized phrase = subordinate clause

69. syllogism – From the Greek for “reckoning together,” a syllogism (or syllogistic reasoning or syllogistic logic) is a deductive system of formal logic that presents two premises (the first one called “major” and the second called “minor”) that inevitably lead to a sound conclusion. A frequently cited example proceeds as follows:

major premise: All men are mortal.

minor premise: Socrates is a man.

conclusion: Therefore, Socrates is a mortal.

A syllogism’s conclusion is valid only if each of the two premises is valid. Syllogisms may also present the specific idea first (“Socrates”) and the general second (“all men”).

***70. symbol/symbolism** – Generally, anything that represents itself and stands for something else. Usually a symbol is something concrete -- such as an object, action, character, or scene – that represents something more abstract. However, symbols and symbolism can be much more complex. One system classifies symbols into three categories:

(1) *natural symbols* are objects and occurrences from nature to symbolize ideas commonly associated with them (dawn symbolizing hope or a new beginning, a rose symbolizing love, a tree symbolizing knowledge).

(2) *conventional symbols* are those that have been invested with meaning by a group (religious symbols such as a cross or Star of David; national symbols, such as a flag or an eagle; or group symbols, such as a skull and crossbones for pirates or the scale of justice for lawyers).

(3) *literary symbols* are sometimes also conventional in the sense that they are found in a variety of works and are more generally recognized. However, a work’s symbols may be more complicated.

On the AP exam, try to determine what abstraction an object is a symbol for and to what extent it is successful in representing that abstraction.

71. syntax – The way an author chooses to join words into phrases, clauses, and sentences. Syntax is similar to diction, but you can differentiate them by thinking of syntax as groups of words, while diction refers to the

individual words. In the multiple-choice section of the AP exam, expect to be asked some questions about how an author manipulates syntax. In the essay section, you will need to analyze how syntax produces effects.

(Note: For vocabulary assignment, write three sentences using different syntax for effect, and explain the effect).

- *72. **theme** – The central idea or message of a work, the insight it offers into life. Usually theme is unstated in fictional works, but in nonfiction, the theme may be directly state, especially in expository or argumentative writing.
- *73. **thesis** – In expository writing, the thesis statement is the sentence or group of sentences that directly expresses the author’s opinion, purpose, meaning, or position. Expository writing is usually judged by analyzing how accurately, effectively, and thoroughly a writer has proven the thesis.
- *74. **tone** – Similar to mood, tone describes the author’s attitude toward his material, the audience, or both. Tone is easier to determine in spoken language than in written language. Considering how a work would sound if it were read aloud can help in identifying an author’s tone. Some words describing tone are playful, serious, businesslike, sarcastic, humorous, formal, ornate, sardonic, somber, etc.
- 75. transition** – A word or phrase that links different ideas. Used especially, although not exclusively, in expository and argumentative writing, transitions effectively signal a shift from one idea to another. A few commonly used transitional words or phrases are *furthermore*, *consequently*, *nevertheless*, *for example*, *in addition*, *likewise*, *similarly*, *on the contrary*, etc. More sophisticated writers use more subtle means of transition.
- *76. **understatement** – The ironic minimalizing of fact, understatement presents something as less significant than it is. The effect can frequently be humorous and emphatic. Understatement is the opposite of hyperbole. Example: Jonathan Swift’s *A Tale of a Tub*: “Last week I saw a woman flayed, and you will hardly believe how much it altered her person for the worse.”
- *77. **wit** -- On modern usage, intellectually amusing language that surprises and delights. A witty statement is humorous, while suggesting the speaker’s verbal power in creating ingenious and perceptive remarks. Wit usually uses terse language that makes a pointed statement. Historically, wit originally meant basic understanding. Its meaning evolved to include speed of understanding, and finally, it grew to mean quick perception including creative fancy and a quick tongue to articulate an answer that demanded the same quick perception.

Adapted and excerpted from Edward P. J. Corbett and Robert J. Connors’ Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 0195115422.

Tone Vocabulary

Like the tone of a speaker's voice, the tone of a work of literature expresses the writer's feelings. To determine the tone of a passage, ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is the subject of the passage? Who is its intended audience?
2. What are the most important words in the passage? What connotations do these words have?
3. What feelings are generated by the images of the passage?
4. Are there any hints that the speaker or narrator does not really mean everything he or she says? If any jokes are made, are they lighthearted or bitter?
5. If the narrator were speaking aloud, what would the tone of his or her voice be?

Positive Tone/Attitude Words

Amiable	Consoling	Friendly	Playful
Amused	Content	Happy	Pleasant
Appreciative	Dreamy	Hopeful	Proud
Authoritative	Ecstatic	Impassioned	Relaxed
Benevolent	Elated	Jovial	Reverent
Brave	Elevated	Joyful	Romantic
Calm	Encouraging	Jubilant	Soothing
Cheerful	Energetic	Lighthearted	Surprised
Cheery	Enthusiastic	Loving	Sweet
Compassionate	Excited	Optimistic	Sympathetic
Complimentary	Exuberant	Passionate	Vibrant
Confident	Fanciful	Peaceful	Whimsical

Negative Tone/Attitude Words

Accusing	Choleric	Furious	Quarrelsome
Aggravated	Coarse	Harsh	Shameful
Agitated	Cold	Haughty	Smooth
Angry	Condemnatory	Hateful	Snooty
Apathetic	Condescending	Hurtful	Superficial
Arrogant	Contradictory	Indignant	Surly
Artificial	Critical	Inflammatory	Testy
Audacious	Desperate	Insulting	Threatening
Belligerent	Disappointed	Irritated	Tired
Bitter	Disgruntled	Manipulative	Uninterested
Boring	Disgusted	Obnoxious	Wrathful
Brash	Disinterested	Outraged	
Childish	Facetious	Passive	

Humor-Irony-Sarcasm Tone/Attitude Words

Amused	Droll	Mock-heroic	Sardonic
Bantering	Facetious	Mocking	Satiric
Bitter	Flippant	Mock-serious	Scornful
Caustic	Giddy	Patronizing	Sharp
Comical	Humorous	Pompous	Silly
Condescending	Insolent	Quizzical	Taunting
Contemptuous	Ironic	Ribald	Teasing
Critical	Irreverent	Ridiculing	Whimsical
Cynical	Joking	Sad	Wry
Disdainful	Malicious	Sarcastic	

Tone Vocabulary (contd.)

Sorrow-Fear-Worry Tone/Attitude Words

Aggravated	Embarrassed	Morose	Resigned
Agitated	Fearful	Mournful	Sad
Anxious	Foreboding	Nervous	Serious
Apologetic	Gloomy	Numb	Sober
Apprehensive	Grave	Ominous	Solemn
Concerned	Hollow	Paranoid	Somber
Confused	Hopeless	Pessimistic	Staid
Dejected	Horrific	Pitiful	Upset
Depressed	Horror	Poignant	
Despairing	Melancholy	Regretful	
Disturbed	Miserable	Remorseful	

Neutral Tone/Attitude Words

Admonitory	Dramatic	Intimate	Questioning
Allusive	Earnest	Judgmental	Reflective
Apathetic	Expectant	Learned	Reminiscent
Authoritative	Factual	Loud	Resigned
Baffled	Fervent	Lyrical	Restrained
Callous	Formal	Matter-of-fact	Seductive
Candid	Forthright	Meditative	Sentimental
Ceremonial	Frivolous	Nostalgic	Serious
Clinical	Haughty	Objective	Shocking
Consoling	Histrionic	Obsequious	Sincere
Contemplative	Humble	Patriotic	Unemotional
Conventional	Incredulous	Persuasive	Urgent
Detached	Informative	Pleading	Vexed
Didactic	Inquisitive	Pretentious	Wistful
Disbelieving	Instructive	Provocative	Zealous

Language Words-Used to describe the force or quality of the entire piece

Like word choice, the language of a passage has control over tone. Consider language to be the entire body of words used in a text, not simply isolated bits of diction, imagery, or detail. For example, an invitation to a graduation might use formal language, whereas a biology text would use scientific and clinical language.

Different from tone, these words describe the force or quality of the diction, images, and details AS A WHOLE. These words qualify how the work is written.

Artificial	Exact	Literal	Pretentious
Bombastic	Figurative	Moralistic	Provincial
Colloquial	Formal	Obscure	Scholarly
Concrete	Grotesque	Obtuse	Sensuous
Connotative	Homespun	Ordinary	Simple
Cultured	Idiomatic	Pedantic	Slang
Detached	Informal	Picturesque	Symbolic
Emotional	Inspid	Plain	Trite
Esoteric	Jargon	Poetic	Vulgar
Euphemistic	Learned	Precise	

Source: PAP/AP English Handbook, Grades 9-12

AP Caliber Verbs
(to use in essays)

Practice using a variety of verbs to phrase “said” and “symbolize” in different ways. Avoid using “symbolize” because students find it too easy to write “x symbolizes y” and then neglect to explain or justify with details.

show (1 x only)	epitomize	illustrate	demonstrate
symbolize (1 x only)	suggest	imply	infer
relay	portray	relate	represent
signify	allude	reveal	discover
develop	describe	reflect	use
characterize	involves	diminish	draw
evoke	view	enable	transmit
introduce	convey	establish	magnify
detail	portend	foreshadow	reiterate
minimize	maximize	identify	correlate
parallels	corroborate	refer	strengthen
weaken	display	amplify	exemplify
promote	produces	concludes	consider
writes	continues	points	stem
contributes	cause	affects	effect (verb)
testifies	verifies	certifies	vouch
affirms	deters	presents	marks
entails	explains	traces	leads
directs	compare	contrast	confuse
support	legitimize	deny	defy
define	enforces	enhance	reinforce
adds	detract	resembles	contradict
validates	invalidates	hint	create
dismiss	justify	translate	indicates
proposes	mislead	guide	address
reaffirms	states	specify	complement
render	comprehend	link	communicate
paint	builds	balances	ascertain
tint	understand	envelops	evolves
simplify	complicate	juxtapose	combines
connect	expresses	parodies	satirize

WORDS TO DESCRIBE SYNTAX

plain	esoteric	elegant
spare	journalistic	staccato
austere	terse	abrupt
unadorned	laconic	solid
ornate	harsh	thudding
elaborate	grating	sprawling
flowery	mellifluous	disorganized
jumbled	musical	dry
chaotic	lilting	deceptively simple
obfuscating	lyrical	
erudite	whimsical	

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