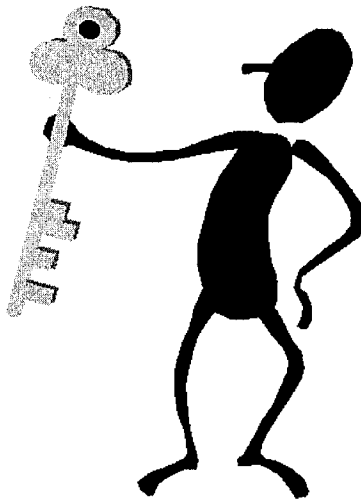


Framingham High School's Research Paper Handbook

Sixth Edition



This Copy Belongs to:

Name

Homeroom

Acknowledgments

Without the support of the following, this handbook would not be possible:

Dr. Steven Hiersche, Superintendent
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NOTE: The information in this booklet is adapted from the following sources:


Harvey, Gordon. *Writing With Sources: A Guide for Harvard Students*. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1998. Print
MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2009. Print.
The Purdue OWL. Purdue U Writing Lab, 2008. Web. 27 Dec. 2008.


Revised in 2010 by Mr. Cook, Ms. London, Ms. Maffei and Ms. Wood


FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)





Look for this symbol  on the pages indicated for a more complete answer or to see the answer illustrated in an example.


 *Why is plagiarism such a big deal?*
It is theft. (p.4)


 *Do I have to cite ideas or words that come from my textbook, when my instructor will know perfectly well where they came from?*
Yes. (p.4)


 *When do I have to use quotation marks?*
You must use quotation marks whenever you use the exact words or phrases from the source. (p.4)


 *If I use the same source throughout a paragraph, may I simply cite the source once at the start or end of that paragraph?*
Only if you write each sentence in a way that there can be no doubt as to what comes from the source and what is your own thinking. Check with your teacher to be sure.

 *If I use a phrase from a source repeatedly in my paper, must I quote and cite it every time?*
Only on its first appearance, in most cases.

 *Do I have to cite material that is background to my main argument, such as a summary of historical context?*
Yes.

 *If my paper closely analyzes a single text, or repeatedly quotes from or refers to the same text, must I cite it each time?*
Not if you set up an abbreviated system. (p.21)

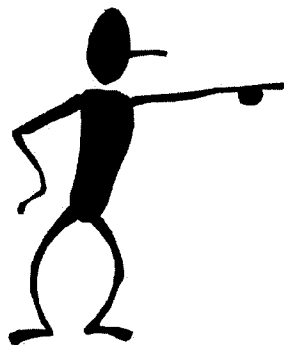
 *When should I use present tense and when should I use past tense?*
You should use present tense when writing about fictional literature and use past tense when writing about nonfiction or historical information.

 *What should I do if I still have questions or if my source type isn't in this handbook?*

1. Ask your teacher.
2. Refer to the 7th edition of the MLA Handbook.
3. Refer to Purdue University's Owl Website (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu>)

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To avoid plagiarism and the subsequent disciplinary action, several systems for citing sources have been created. One such system is the Modern Language Association (MLA), which this handbook will introduce. This system is most widely used in the humanities, and other disciplines may use other styles to cite information. You will need to reference this handbook throughout your FHS career, so don't lose it!

Plagiarism



“Plagiarism is passing off a source’s information, ideas, or words as your own by omitting to acknowledge that source—an act of lying, cheating, and stealing. *Plagiarus* means kidnapper, in Latin; in antiquity *plagiarii* were pirates who sometimes stole children: when you plagiarize [...] you steal the brain child of another” (Harvey 22). According to the student handbook, the penalty for the first offence is one day of Saturday school and a zero on the assignment. Additional offences will result in more severe disciplinary action.



Original Source:

“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”
- The Gettysburg Address

Three Common Types of Plagiarism

1. Word-for-Word Copying

Eighty-seven years ago our new nation was conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Note: Here you should accurately quote the passage underlined above and add parenthetical documentation, because you have used your source’s original wording.

2. Paraphrasing

Almost a hundred years ago when our ancestors created the constitution, they built it on the foundation of equality among all people.

Note: Since you are paraphrasing your source’s original idea, you must document the source of this idea by adding a parenthetical citation even though you have completely rephrased it.

3. Mosaic Plagiarism

America was dedicated to liberty and conceived with the idea that all men are created equal. In fact, our people have been loyal to that proposition ever since our fathers brought forth a new nation on this continent.

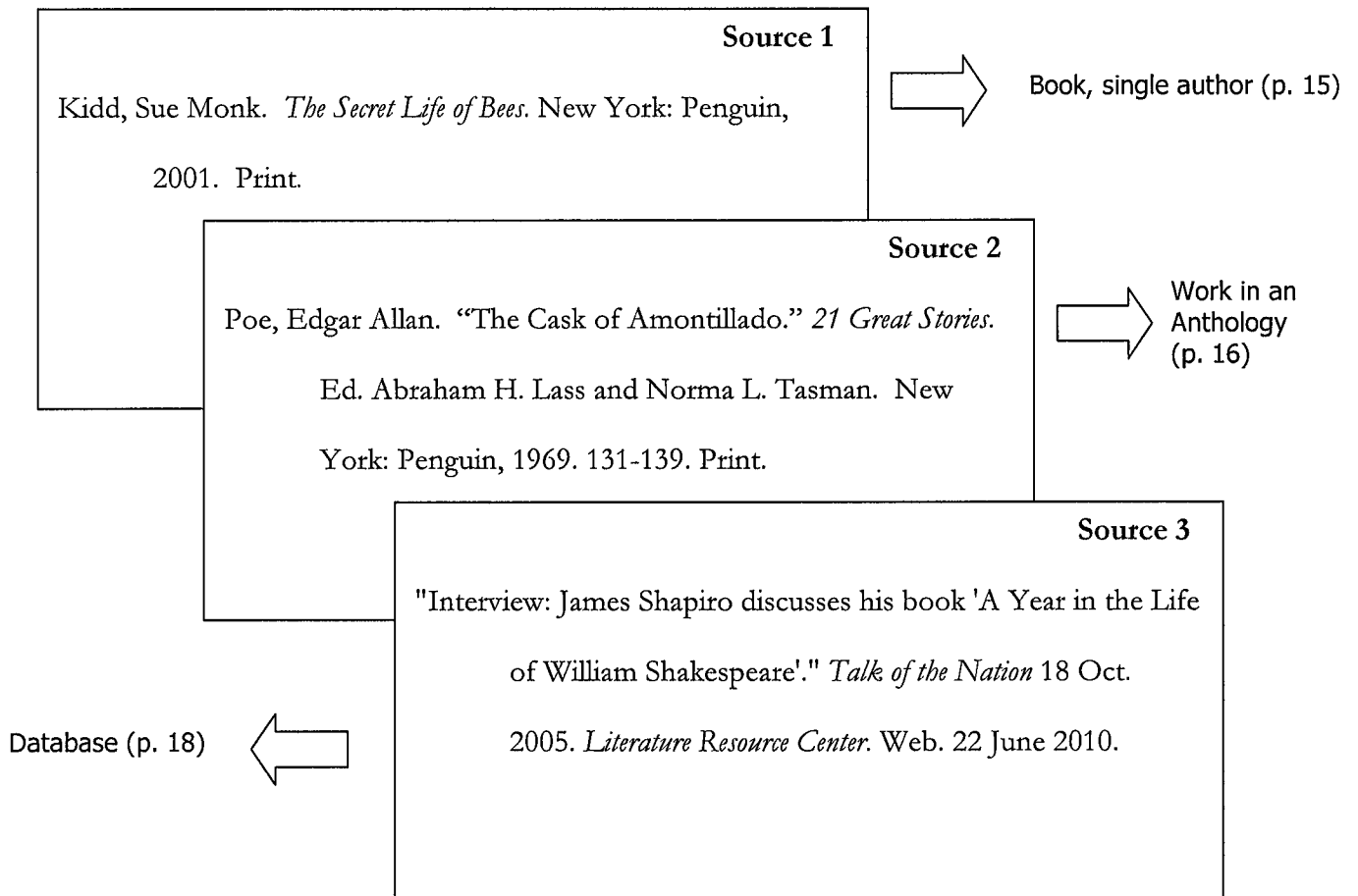
Note: The underlined words are taken directly from the text. Here again you should accurately quote the original passage and add a parenthetical citation because you still have used much of your original source’s wording. Such a mosaic, although unimaginative, would be honest and correct.

Source Cards

A source card has two purposes:

1. It gives you information to help you find the source again.
2. It documents the sources you are using for your paper.

The information found on this card will match your Works Cited page entry, so it's important that you take the information down accurately at the time you gather information.



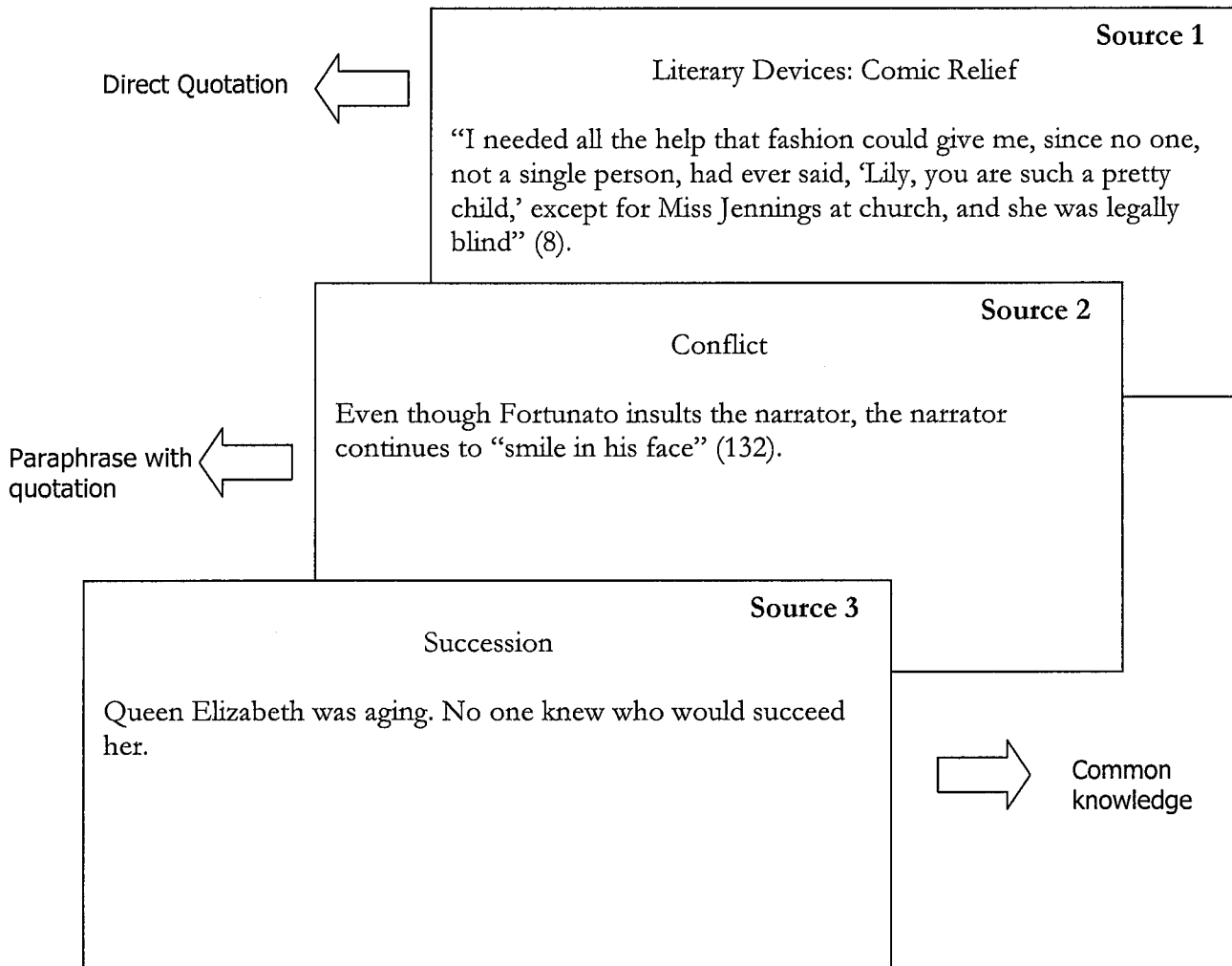
Note Cards

There are four different things that can be on note cards:

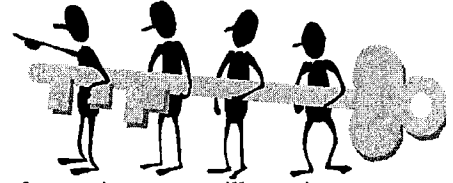
1. **A direct quotation:** copying the words of a source exactly, including spelling, capitalization, and punctuation marks as they appear in the original text.
2. **A paraphrase:** restating at least 90% of an idea from a source in your own words.
3. **Common knowledge:** basic biographical information and historical events that are well-known and accepted by scholars.
4. **Your own ideas and thoughts.**

Your note cards should contain the following information:

- A source number or the author's last name (taken from your source card).
- A guideline (a title identifying the topic of the note card).
- Notes (see above for the four kinds of notes).
- Page number(s), if available.



Formatting the Outline



An outline is basically a simple list of the points you will make and information you will use in your paper. If you used note cards, it is helpful to sort the note cards into different categories before writing your outline.

An outline is supposed to make writing your paper easier because it helps you organize your ideas before you sit down to write. Some outlines are brief, but others are quite detailed.

Full MLA Heading

Working Title

Thesis: Although she appears not to care, my teacher insists that her students use only compound, complex or compound-complex sentences in order to write strong thesis statements and topic sentences.

I. Topic Sentence of Body Paragraph #1 (full (not simple) sentence)

A. Major detail #1 that supports topic sentence (citation)

1. *minor detail* that supports Major Detail #1 (citation)
2. *minor detail* that supports minor detail (citation)
3. *minor detail* that supports minor detail (citation)
4. *minor detail* that supports Major Detail #1 (citation)

B. Major Detail #2 that supports topic sentence (citation)

1. *minor detail* that supports Major Detail #2 (citation)
2. *minor detail* that supports Major Detail #2 (citation)

II. Topic Sentence of Body Paragraph #2 (full (not simple) sentence)

A. Major Detail #1 that supports topic sentence (citation)

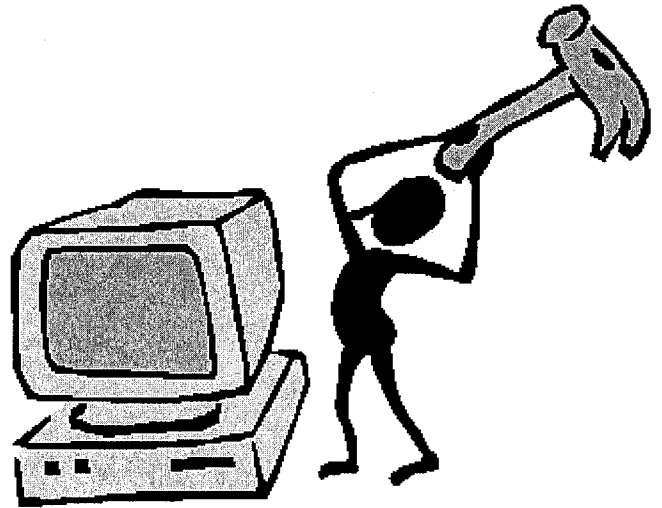
1. *minor detail* that supports Major Detail #2 (citation)
2. *minor detail* that supports Major Detail #2 (citation)

Helpful Hints

DO NOT FORGET: SAVE YOUR PAPER OFTEN. When your computer crashes or the power goes out, you will be glad you did.

When saving, give your file a name that reflects the assignment so that it is easy for you to locate and organize; for example,

- “Freshman English Research Paper Outline”
- “Freshman English Research Paper Draft”
- “Freshman English Research Paper Final”



Home Access to “My Documents”

Go to <docs.Framingham.k12.ma.us>

Login: Student\ID number

Password: ***** (same as for school computer login)

Be sure to **UPLOAD** any saved changes back to your document folder.

Home Access to FHS Databases

You may access databases through a link on the FHS library website. To find the FHS Library website, go to the Framingham High School website at <<http://www.framingham.k12.ma.us/fhs.cfm>>.

On the left side of the FHS home page go to the *School Services* link and click on *Library*. From there, click on the *Home access to databases* link and follow the directions.

You will need a password to access the FHS Gale databases: **pantaray**.

Using Parenthetical Citations

A parenthetical citation quickly provides the reader with the source from which you took information. It usually includes the first **word** (excluding A, An, or The) of the source citation and the page number (when available) in parentheses. A parenthetical citation is always needed when you use a quotation.

When writing, it is of the utmost importance that you give credit to anyone whose ideas or words have been used in your paper. (Note the information about plagiarism on page 4). You should also cite the source of any information in your paper that is not considered common knowledge.

1. If you include the author's name in your own writing, you do not need to include it in the parenthetical citation. Simply use the page number on which you found the quotation.
2. If you have two or more works by the same author in your Works Cited, include the author's last name, the title of the work, and the page number in your parenthetical citation.
3. If you quote an indirect source (i.e. someone else's comments published in a source) use the abbreviation "qtd. in" before the author's last name in the parenthetical citation. For example: (qtd. in Matthews 22).

Source 1

Kidd, Sue Monk. *The Secret Life of Bees*. New York: Penguin,

2001. Print.

Source 1

Literary Devices: Comic Relief

"I needed all the help that fashion could give me, since no one, not a single person, had ever said, 'Lily, you are such a pretty child,' except for Miss Jennings at church, and she was legally blind" (8).

In your paper:

Lily comically exclaims, "I needed all the help that fashion could give me, since no one, not a single person, had ever said, 'Lily, you are such a pretty child,' except for Miss Jennings at church, and she was legally blind" (Kidd 8).

**This is the
parenthetical
citation!**

Using Quotations

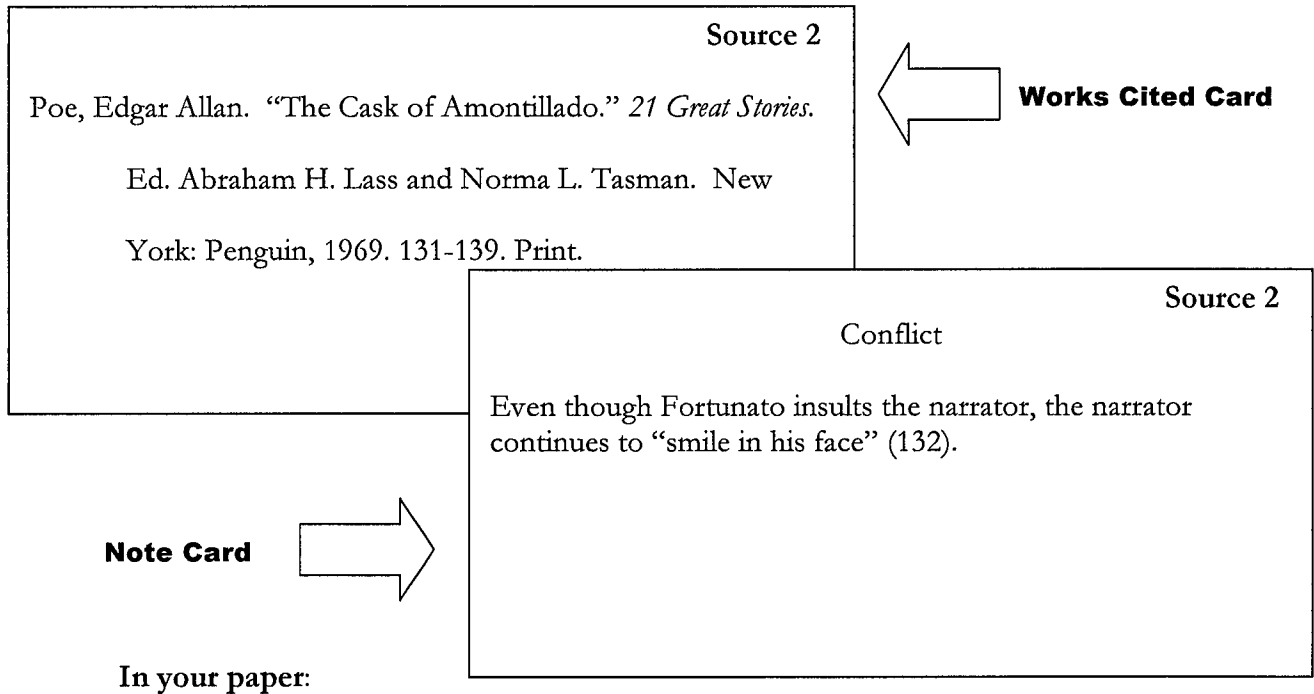
There are different rules for formatting when you quote prose and verse. Use page numbers for quotations from **prose** and line numbers for quotations from **verse**. **Verse** is poetry or song lyrics, and **prose** is any piece of writing that is not verse.

The best way to include a quotation in your paper is by choosing a very short excerpt and weaving it smoothly into your own sentence.

Quotations of Prose

Short quotations: quotations that take up **no more than four** typed lines of your paper:

1. Introduce your quotation.
2. Insert the quotation into your paper using quotation marks, eliminating the punctuation mark at the end.
3. Place the parenthetical citation after the quotation with end punctuation following the closing parenthesis.



Note Card →

Works Cited Card ←

In your paper:

The narrator of "Cask of Amontillado" introduces the man v. man conflict from the very beginning of the short story. He informs the reader that Fortunato's insult will not outwardly affect him, as the narrator continues to "smile in his face" (Poe 132).

Long quotations: quotations of **more than four** typed lines of **your** paper:

1. Introduce your quotation followed by a **colon**.
2. Indent each line of the quotation one inch (10 spaces or 2 tabs).
3. At the end of the quotation place a period.
4. Place the parenthetical citation **after** the period.
5. Double-space the quotation.
6. Do not use quotation marks!

Source 2

Poe, Edgar Allan. "The Cask of Amontillado." *21 Great Stories*.

Ed. Abraham H. Lass and Norma L. Tasman. New

York: Penguin, 1969. 131-139. Print.

Source 2

Conflict

"It must be understood, that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He has a weak point – this Fortunato – although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit" (132).

In your paper:

The narrator of "The Cask of Amontillado" introduces the man v. man conflict from the very beginning of the short story. He informs the reader:

It must be understood, that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good-will. I continued, as was my wont, to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my smile *now* was at the thought of his immolation.

He has a weak point – this Fortunato – although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit. (Poe 132)

This discrepancy between appearance and reality makes it impossible for Fortunato to grasp the narrator's true motives.

Quotations of Verse

Short quotations: quotations of **no more than three lines** of verse:

1. Introduce the quotation.
2. Insert the quotation into your paper using quotation marks, eliminating the punctuation mark at the end. (Do not begin another line of text).
3. Use a forward slash “/” to indicate the break between two lines (never more than two forward slashes in quotation marks).
4. Place the parenthetical citation after the quotation with a period following the closing parenthesis. **REMEMBER TO USE LINE NUMBERS, NOT PAGE NUMBERS.** Continue writing on the same line.

Source 4

Bishop, Elizabeth. “In the Waiting Room.” *Poets.org*. Acad. of Amer. Poets, n.d. Web. 30 May 2008.

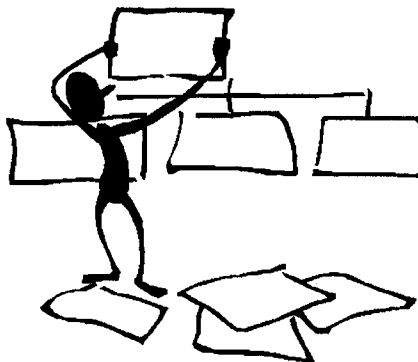
Source 4

Setting

In Worcester, Massachusetts,
I went with Aunt Consuelo
to keep her dentist’s appointment
and sat and waited for her
in the dentist’s waiting room. (1-5)

In your paper:

The speaker establishes the setting: “In Worcester, Massachusetts, / I went with Aunt Consuelo / to keep her dentist’s appointment” (Bishop 1-3).



Long quotations: quotations of **more than three lines** of verse:

1. Write a proper introduction followed by a **colon**.
2. Indent each line of the quotation one inch (10 spaces or 2 tab keys).
3. At the end of the quotation place a period.
4. Place the parenthetical citation after the period.
5. Double-space the quotation.
6. Do not use quotation marks.
7. Do not use / marks to indicate a break in lines. Instead, copy the lines exactly as you see them in the poem or play.

Source 4
Bishop, Elizabeth. "In the Waiting Room." <i>Poets.org</i> . Acad. of Amer. Poets, n.d. Web. 30 May 2008.

Source 4
Setting
In Worcester, Massachusetts, I went with Aunt Consuelo to keep her dentist's appointment and sat and waited for her in the dentist's waiting room. (1-5)

In your paper:

Through description of the setting, the speaker creates an anticipatory mood:

In Worcester, Massachusetts,
I went with Aunt Consuelo
to keep her dentist's appointment
and sat and waited for her
in the dentist's waiting room. (Bishop 1-5)

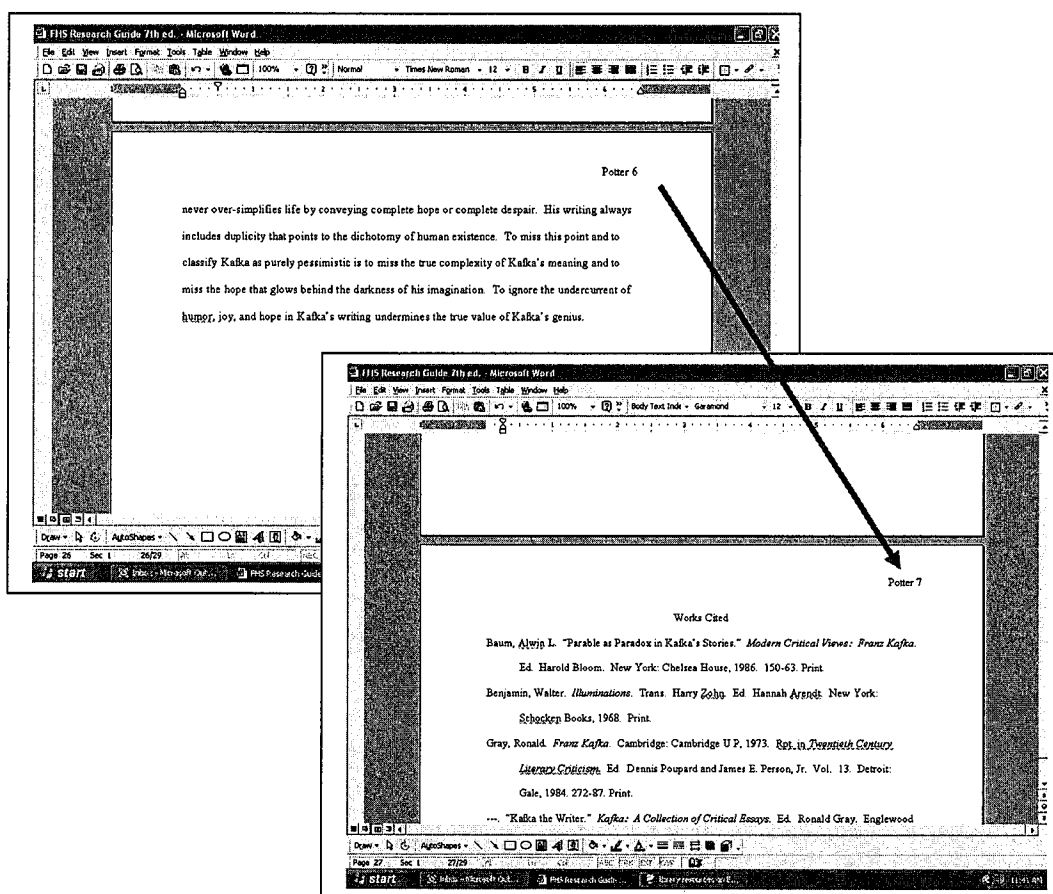
The repetition of the word "wait" leads the reader to experience the tension brought on by the "waiting room."

Creating a Works Cited Page

A Works Cited page is a kind of bibliography at the end of your paper. The following are some basic forms for Works Cited entries.

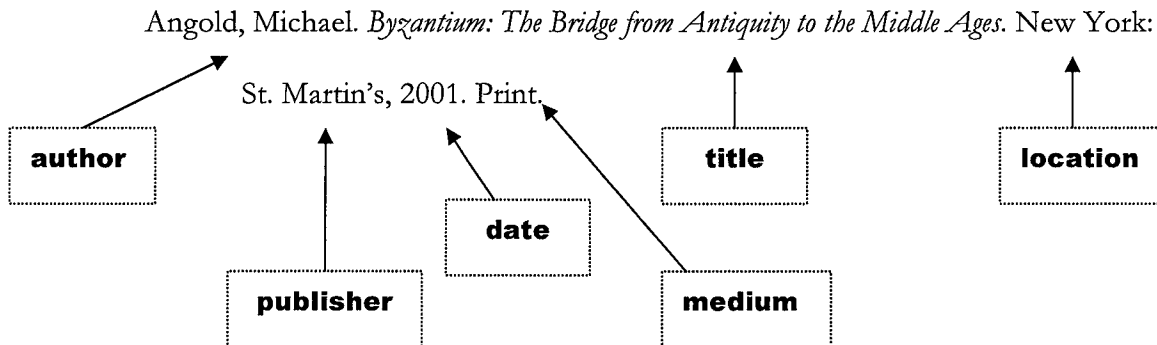
Helpful Hints:

- Begin the Works Cited list on a new page, but continue with the page numbers of your paper. For example, if your paper ends on page 6, the Works Cited page begins on page 7.
- Double-space everything.
- Many sources will not have all of the information listed below. You will use abbreviations for any missing information. (p. 17)
- Many sources list several cities of publication. In those cases you should pick the first city to use on your Works Cited page.
- Many sources list several years of publication. In those cases you should use the most recent year on your Works Cited page.
- Publishers' names are often shortened. For instance, "Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc." should appear as "Macmillan" in your source citation. "University of Chicago Press" should appear as "U of Chicago P."



Books

One author



Two or three authors

Blain, Virginia, Isobel Grundy, and Patricia Clements. *The Feminist Companion to Literature in English: Women Writers from the Middle Ages to the Present*. New Haven: Yale UP, 1990. Print.

Editor, but no author

Nabokov, Peter, ed. *Native American Testimony: A Chronicle of Indian-White Relations from Prophecy to the Present, 1492-1992*. New York: Viking Penguin, 1991. Print.

When the editor is the first part of the entry, the notation "ed." or "eds." comes after the name(s). If the editor comes later in the entry, the designation "Ed." precedes the name(s).

Author and a translator

Homer. *The Odyssey*. Trans. Robert Fitzgerald. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998. Print.

Multivolume work

Child, Francis James, ed. *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads*. 1883-98. Vol. 1. New York: Dover, 1965. Print.

Republished book or a literary work available in several editions

Steinbeck, John. *Of Mice and Men*. 1938. New York: Penguin Books, 1993. Print.



Articles from Encyclopedias and other Reference Books

Article in a general encyclopedia with author

Gilbert, Marc Jason. "Vietnam War." *The World Book Encyclopedia*. 2003. Print.

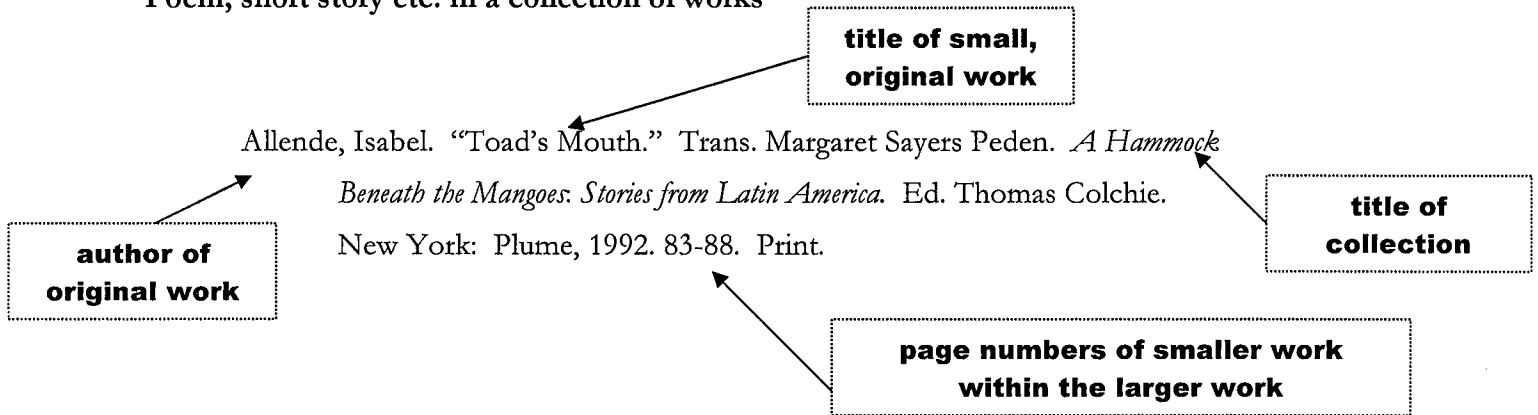
Article in an encyclopedia or reference book without author

"Homer." *Ancient Greece and Rome: An Encyclopedia for Students*. Vol. 2. New York: Scribner's, 1998. Print.

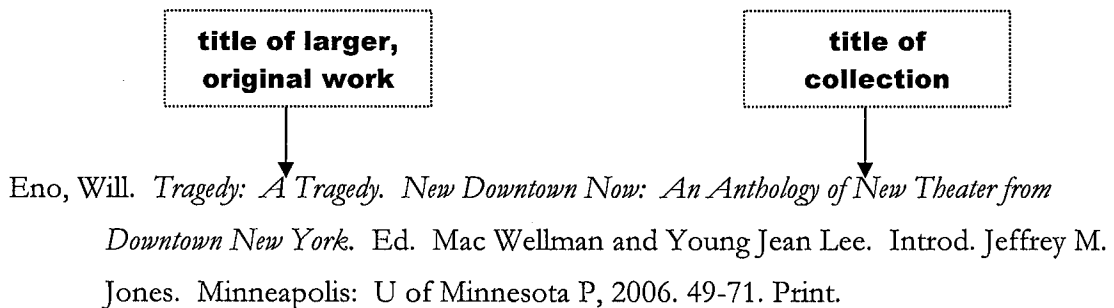


A Work in an Anthology or Collection

Poem, short story etc. in a collection of works



Novel or play in an anthology



Introduction, preface, foreword, or afterword written by someone other than the author

Sears, Barry. Afterword. *The Jungle*. By Upton Sinclair. New York : Signet, 2001. 343-47. Print.

Article from Magazines or Newspapers

With author

Deahl, Ashlea. "Cellphone Etiquette? Hello?" *The Boston Globe*. 26 July 2003: E1. Print.

Without author

"The Decade of the Spy." *Newsweek*. 7 March 1994: 26-27. Print.

Film or video

"Episode 1, 1861—The Cause." *The Civil War*. Prods. Ken Burns and Ric Burns. PBS Video,

1989. Film.

Secret Life of Bees. Dir. Gina Prince-Bythewood. Fox. 2008. DVD.

"Utah Mine Rescue Funeral." *CNN.com*. Cable News Network, 21 Aug. 2007. Web. 21 Aug.

2007.

medium

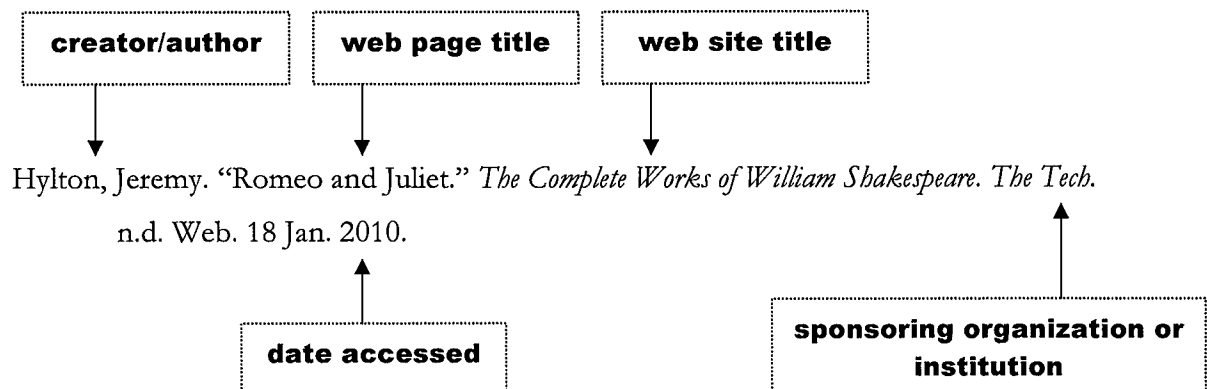
Electronic Sources and Web Publications

Many sources will not have all of the information necessary for a citation. You will use the following abbreviations in place of this missing information:

n.d.	no publication date
n.p.	no publisher or sponsor
n.pag.	no page number available (<i>only for online journal or anthology</i>)

A URL is only needed when the reader will have difficulty locating your source or when your teacher requires it.

Website



Article in magazine or newspaper online

Wilford, John Noble. "Oldest Planet Is Revealed, Challenging Old Theories." *The New York Times on the Web*. 11 July 2003. Web. 25 June 2010.

Online Informational Databases

The citation provided at the bottom of the database entry is sufficient for a Works Cited page.

Eagleton, Terence. "Language and Reality in *Twelfth Night*." *Critical Quarterly* 9.3 (Autumn 1967): 217-228. Rpt. in *Shakespearean Criticism*. Ed. Dana Ramel Barnes and Marie Lazzari. Vol. 34. Detroit: Gale Research, 1997. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 25 June 2010.

Harry Potter

Mr. Cook

World Literature

15 August 2010

Kafka's Undercurrent of Optimism

Thesis: A great deal of evidence supports the interpretation that Kafka is pessimistic, but some evidence contradicts that interpretation, and the contradictory evidence is persuasive enough to prove that Kafka's writing is not pessimistic, that it does express hope in the end.

- I. Kafka's apparent pessimism is influenced by his immediate surroundings.
 - A. Critics agree his writing is heavily influenced by his father.
 1. Kafka thought of his father as "coarse, practical and domineering" ("Kafka" 677).
 2. After the death of two older brothers in infancy, Kafka felt the pressure from his father of being the oldest.
 - a. Critics see his father as the root of his pessimism.
 - b. Characters are often "...tortured by anxiety and loneliness" (Hoffmeister 209).
 - B. Kafka felt isolated as a German-speaking Jew in Czechoslovakia.
- II. Despite the perceived pessimism, some critics believe he wasn't entirely pessimistic.
 - A. Thomas Mann believes Kafka was not an unbeliever, that he was spiritual.
 - B. Use of humor implies some optimism.
 1. Kafka himself laughed immensely while reading The Trial to friends.
 2. Many critics, such as Ronald Gray, fail to see the humor and only acknowledge the apparent negativity.
 - a. Mann recognizes that Kafka is "wrestling" (292) with both sides.

- b. Gray is lopsided toward the negativity only
- III. Many critics overlook the optimism because it is subtle, but that only seems to make it more significant.
 - A. The end of “The Metamorphosis” is a prime example of his optimism.
 - B. Gregor’s situation, which is “utterly pessimistic” (Gray, *Franz Kafka* 280), overshadows and hides the family’s optimistic situation.
- IV. Kafka saw life as a mix of futility and hope.
 - A. Kafka told his friend Max Brod that there is “plenty of hope...but not for us” (Benjamin 116).
 - 1. Kafka believes the powers above are cruel.
 - 2. He also sees the chance for things to change.
 - B. Benjamin’s folksong shows that Kafka’s view was not uncommon during his day.
- V. The paradox of Kafka’s writing is that it is both comic and tragic.
 - A. Kafka’s humor is intertwined with tragedy (which contrasts American humor that serves as a relief from troubles).
 - 1. Wallace recognizes the weaving of tragedy and joy in Kafka’s writing.
 - 2. Whitman’s “Song of Myself” expresses sentiments (1324-1326).
 - B. Kafka’s writing reflects the dichotomy of human existence – to miss it is to miss his real talents as a writer.

Harry Potter

Mr. Cook

World Literature

25 August 2010

Kafka's Undercurrent of Optimism

Franz Kafka only published a handful of stories during his life, but after his death all his works were published and he became famous posthumously (Hoffmeister 209). The great irony is not that Kafka did not live to see his fame, but that his fame was only achieved because of the

disloyalty of a friend. Kafka had requested that all his writings be burned after he died, but his friend, Max Brod, ignored that request and had his writings published instead (209). Thus, in the

1920's Kafka's three novels, *The Trial*, *The Castle*, and *Amerika*, plus his numerous short stories were all made available to the public and to the critics ("Kafka" 677). Ever since then people have been reading and enjoying Kafka's work while the critics have been trying to explain and

often disagree about the meaning and purpose of his work. One of the main points of controversy is whether Kafka meant his work to be totally pessimistic. A great deal of evidence supports that interpretation, but some evidence contradicts it, and the contradictory evidence is persuasive enough to prove that Kafka's writing is not totally pessimistic; it does express hope in the end.

One major aspect of Kafka's writing upon which all the critics agree is that it was heavily influenced by his relationship with his father. Kafka was born into a middle-class Jewish family in Prague, Austria-Hungary, known today as the Czech Republic (Nervi). Kafka thought of his father as a "coarse, practical, and domineering shopkeeper and patriarch, who worshipped nothing but material success and social advancement, belonged to a race of giants and was an

encyclopedia
article with
author

same source
as the prior
citation

encyclopedia article without author

website

awesome, admirable, but repulsive tyrant” (“Kafka” 677). Kafka’s two older brothers both died in infancy, and as the eldest child he never felt able to live up to his father’s expectations (677). Often critics point to his relationship with his father as a root cause of pessimism in Kafka’s writing. The characters in his stories are often “deprived of spiritual security, and tortured by anxiety and loneliness” (Hoffmeister 209). These characters mirror the anxiety that Kafka felt because of his overbearing father. However, his father was not the only contributing factor shaping his characters. Life for a German-speaking Jew in Czechoslovakia was not easy. The “Czechs hated both Germans and Jews, and this alienation permeated his works” (Ozick). In the words of another critic: “the roots of Kafka’s anxiety and despair go deeper than his relationship to his father and family...The source of Kafka’s despair lies in a sense of ultimate isolation from true communion with all human beings” (“Kafka” 678). This spiritual disconnection from other people, especially his father, certainly supports the idea that Kafka was pessimistic about life.

However, other critics suggest that Kafka was a spiritual man who saw life and depicted it as a struggle, but not a hopeless one. Thomas Mann asserts that Kafka was no unbeliever, that he “had faith in the good and the right,” but the inability of humankind to realize and adhere to the good and the right is thematically expressed in Kafka’s works through “a humorously, fantastically despairing good will” (291). Humor is an important element in Kafka that seems to be overlooked by those critics who interpret his work as entirely pessimistic. “Max Brod recalls in his biography that in spite of the ‘fearful earnestness’ of the first chapter of *The Trial*, the small number of friends to whom Kafka read the manuscript all ‘laughed immoderately,’ and he adds that Kafka laughed so hard he could scarcely continue” (Baum 153). Such a sense of humor serves to contradict those critics who imply that Kafka and his works are purely pessimistic. One such critic is Ronald Gray, who compares Kafka to Edgar Allan Poe when he

writes, “Kafka conveys a sense of insidious, indefatigable evil sapping silently all the time at the roots of human existence...” (*A Collection* 222). Gray overstates the negativity of Kafka’s writing and meaning; he fails to recognize the humor, which like the humor of satire, does imply hope for positive change. Mann supports this interpretation when he writes that Kafka sees “with the eye of a satirist; yet at the same time with utter sincerity, faith, and submissiveness, wrestling unintermittedly to win inside the incomprehensible kingdom of grace” (292). This is a more convincing interpretation than that of Gray because it balances the negative implications of Kafka’s writing with the positive implications. In contrast, Gray’s interpretation is lopsided toward the negative only.

Admittedly, the optimistic implications in Kafka’s work are slight, but that serves to make them all the more significant and precious. An example of such hope occurs at the end of “The Metamorphosis” after the death of the protagonist, Gregor Samsa. Kafka implies that Gregor’s family could be headed for happier days:

Then they all three left the apartment together, which was more than they had done for months, and went by tram into the open country outside the town. The tram, in which they were the only passengers, was filled with warm sunshine. Leaning comfortably back in their seats they canvassed their prospects for the future, and it appeared on closer inspection that these were not at all bad, for the jobs they had got, which so far they had never really discussed with each other, were all three admirable and likely to lead to better things later on. (139)

The story has an “utterly pessimistic note, so far as Gregor is concerned,” but it ends with hope for the future of the rest of the family, especially Gregor’s sister, who is old enough to anticipate love, marriage, and a new life (Gray, *Franz Kafka* 280).

↑ one of two sources by the same author

Walter Benjamin conveys another important anecdote of Max Brod, Kafka's friend and biographer:

*long
excerpt
of a
quotation
within
a quotation*

"I remember," Brod writes, "a conversation with Kafka which began with present-day Europe and the decline of the human race. 'We are nihilistic thoughts, suicidal thoughts that come into God's head,' Kafka said. This reminded me at first of the Gnostic view of life: God as the evil demiurge, the world as his Fall. 'Oh no,' said Kafka, 'our world is only a bad mood of God, a bad day of his.' 'Then there is hope outside this manifestation of the world that we know?' He smiled. 'Oh, plenty of hope, an infinite amount of hope—but not for us.'" (116)

This typically Kafkaesque paradox lends itself to both sides of critical interpretation, pessimism and optimism at the same time. Kafka sees what Thomas Mann refers to as the illogical remoteness and even cruelty of the powers above (292), yet he maintains that sliver of hope that things do not have to remain as they are, as we know them. Change is possible. Walter Benjamin relates Kafka's hope for the possibility of change to a folksong of the time entitled "The Little Hunchback:"

*long
excerpt
of
verse*

When I come into my room,
My little bed to make,
A little hunchback is in there,
With laughter does he shake.
When I kneel upon my stool
And I want to pray,

A hunchback man is in the room
 And he starts to say:
 My dear child, I beg of you,
 Pray for the little hunchback too. (134)

Benjamin explains, “This little man is at home in distorted life; he will disappear with the coming of the Messiah, of whom a great rabbi once said that he did not wish to change the world by force, but would only make a slight adjustment in it” (134). Benjamin’s analogy implies Kafka views humanity as a little deformed and imperfect, but still open to the possibility of improvement, most likely through some sort of religious salvation.

That folksong also reminds one of the humor in Kafka, which lends itself to the optimistic hope subtly conveyed in Kafka’s work. David Foster Wallace writes about the difficulty in teaching Kafka to students: “the particular sort of funniness Kafka deploys is deeply alien to kids whose neural resonances are American. The fact is that Kafka’s humor has almost none of the particular forms and codes of contemporary U.S. amusement” (23, 26). Wallace asserts that most American humor provides relief from the tragic troubles of life, whereas Kafka’s humor is intertwined with the tragedy. “Kafka’s comedy is always also tragedy, and this tragedy always also an immense and reverent joy” (26). Wallace has perfectly described the paradox of Kafka’s writing; it is both comic and tragic simultaneously, and the result is not dark pessimism but an enlightened understanding and even joy in the inherent contradictions of life. This is the type of joy Walt Whitman expressed in his poem “Song of Myself” when he wrote bluntly, “Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / I am large, I contain *line numbers of verse* ← *short excerpt of verse* multitudes” (1324-1326). The point is not to despair at the conflicting comedy and tragedy of life, but rather to revel in the irreconcilable, inherent contradictions of life. Kafka’s writing

never over-simplifies life by conveying complete hope or complete despair. His writing always includes duplicity that points to the dichotomy of human existence. To miss this point and to classify Kafka as purely pessimistic is to miss the true complexity of Kafka's meaning and to miss the hope that glows behind the darkness of his imagination. To ignore the undercurrent of humor, joy, and hope in Kafka's writing undermines the true value of Kafka's genius.

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Criteria	4	3	2	1
	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never/Not Observed
Thesis/Hypothesis and Focus	Unique thesis/hypothesis clearly stated. Focus evident throughout.	Thesis/hypothesis clearly stated. Focus evident but contains some extraneous information.	Thesis/hypothesis poorly developed, limited and/or vague. Focus is unclear.	No clear thesis/hypothesis. Lacks focus.
Organization and Transition	Clear, logical, well-planned organization with effective transitions.	Organization is evident but not consistent. Transitions are used.	Inconsistent organization. Ineffective transitions.	Lacks organization. Little to no evidence of transitions.
Support, Elaboration, Evidence and Analysis	Specific and sufficient examples and details support thesis/main idea. Interpretation of evidence leads to logical and unique conclusions.	Most examples and details support thesis/main idea. Interpretation of evidence leads to logical and obvious conclusions.	Some examples and details support thesis/main idea. Interpretation of evidence leads to faulty conclusions.	Most examples and/or details do not support thesis/main idea. Illogical and/or no conclusions.
Word choice, Language, Tone	Effective and rich choice of language including content specific vocabulary. Language appropriate for intended audience or task.	Appropriate choice of language and content specific vocabulary. Evidence of awareness of audience or task throughout most of the work.	Limited choice of appropriate language and content specific vocabulary. Limited awareness of audience or task.	Inappropriate and vague choice of language and content specific vocabulary. Little to no awareness of audience or task.
Mechanics and Usage (grammar, spelling, sentence structure) Proofreading	Mechanics are correct. Sentences patterns are varied. Proofreading has resulted in effective editing and revision.	Mechanics are mostly correct; errors do not affect comprehension. Sentences are complete, and show variation in structure. Proofreading shows evidence of editing with some revision.	Mechanical errors are evident. Some sentence fragments and/or run-ons. Word choice is not always acceptable. Proofreading shows evidence of some editing, but no revision.	Frequent mechanical errors that confuse the reader. Sentences are mostly fragments or run-ons. Word choice is vague and unacceptable. Evidence of proofreading is lacking.

