

# 5

## Developing and Supporting a Thesis



*“Let me just charge it for ten more seconds.”*

Jon Adams/The New Yorker Collection/The Cartoon Bank

In this chapter you will learn to

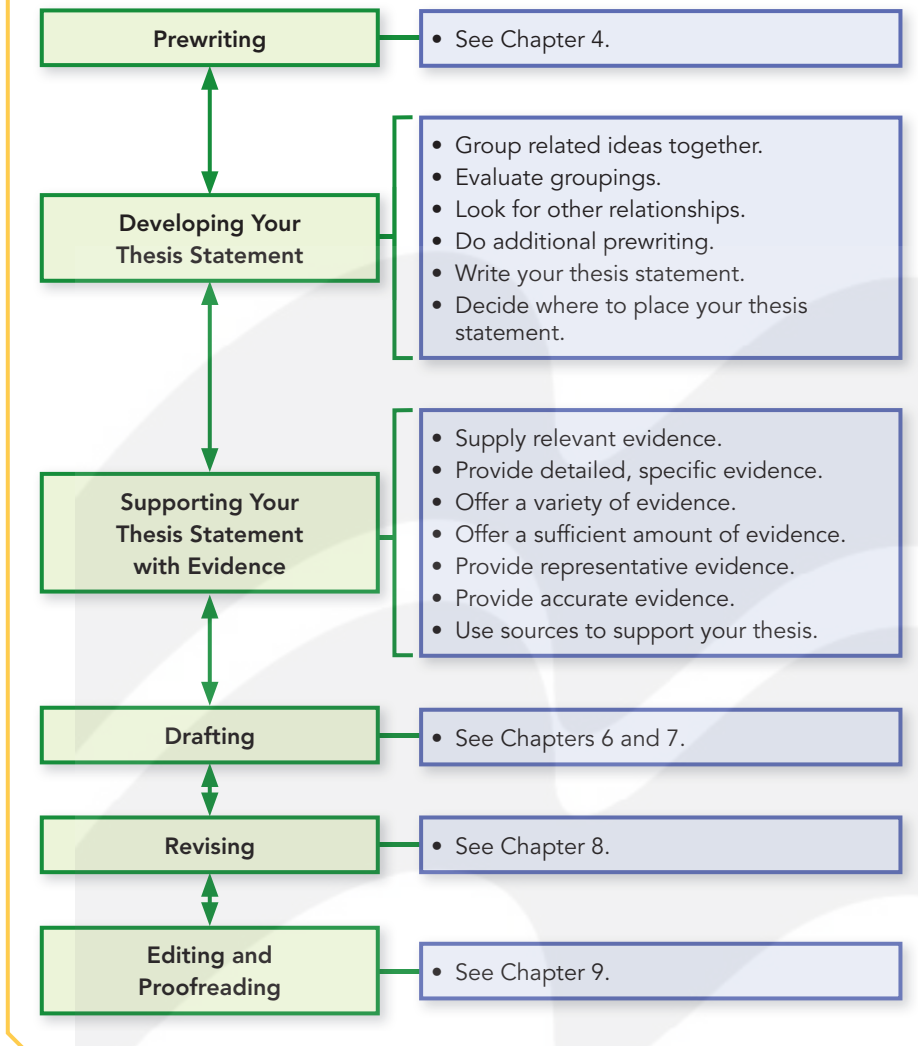
- write effective thesis statements
- support your thesis statement with evidence

### Writing Quick Start

**ANALYZE** Study the cartoon on this page, which pokes fun at an everyday experience.

**WRITE** Working alone or with one or two classmates, draft a statement that expresses the main point of the cartoon. Your statement should not only describe what is happening in the cartoon but also state the idea that the cartoonist is trying to communicate to his audience.

**CONNECT** The statement you have just written is an assertion around which you could build an essay. Such an assertion is called a *thesis statement*. Developing a thesis is an important part of the writing process shown in Graphic Organizer 5.1, which lists the skills presented in this chapter while placing them within the larger context of the writing process.

**GRAPHIC ORGANIZER 5.1** An Overview of the Writing Process


## What Is a Thesis Statement?

A **thesis statement** is the main point of an essay. It is usually expressed in a single sentence. An effective thesis statement should accomplish three goals. It should

1. introduce your narrowed topic
2. reveal what your essay is about
3. state the point you will make about that topic

It may also forecast how the essay will be organized.

Here is a sample thesis statement:

topic
position  
 Playing team sports, especially football and baseball, develops skills and  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 qualities that can make you successful in life because these sports  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
forecast  
 demand communication, teamwork, and responsibility.

When you write, think of a thesis statement as a promise to your reader. The rest of your essay delivers on your promise. The example thesis promises the audience that by reading this essay, they will discover how football and baseball players learn communication, teamwork, and responsibility and how these skills and qualities contribute to the players' success in life.

Keep the following guidelines in mind as you develop your thesis statement:

- **Expect your thesis statement to evolve during prewriting.** Exploring your topic may lead you to discover a new focus or a more interesting way to approach your topic.
- **Expect to do research to revise your thesis.** You may need to do some reading or research to learn more about your topic or tentative thesis.
- **Expect to revise your thesis as you draft and revise your essay.** You may write several versions of a thesis statement before you find one that works, and you may revise your thesis as you gather and organize supporting evidence, draft, and revise your essay.

For more on prewriting, see Chapter 4.

For more on conducting research, see Chapter 22.

For more on drafting and revision, see Chapters 7 and 8.

## Synthesize Ideas to Generate a Working Thesis Statement

Coming up with a working thesis statement involves reviewing your prewriting to determine how some or all of the ideas you discovered fit together:

1. **Review your prewriting, group together details on the same topic, and write a one- or two-word headline for each group.** A student working on the topic of intelligence in dogs noticed in her brainstormed list that the details could be grouped into two general categories: (1) details about learning and (2) details about instinct. Here is how she arranged her ideas:

### Learning

follow commands  
read human emotions  
get housebroken  
serve as guide dogs for blind people

### Instinct

females deliver and care for puppies  
avoid danger and predators  
seek shelter  
automatically raise hair on back in response to aggression

2. **Decide which group(s) of ideas best represents the focus your paper should take.** Sometimes, one group of details will be enough to develop a working thesis. Other times, you'll need to use the details in two or three groups. The student working on a thesis for the topic of intelligence in dogs evaluated her grouped details and decided that learning provided enough material to write about.
3. **Determine whether your thesis should be primarily informative, persuasive, or expressive.** For example, an informative essay may explain the measures taken in one's community to prepare for and prevent school shootings, a persuasive essay may argue that specific steps need to be taken to avoid such shootings, and an expressive essay may recount feelings and responses to a practice drill that simulated a school shooting.
4. **Consider whether you have enough relevant details.** If your list of details is thin, you may not have enough details to come up with a good working thesis. Delete any details that do not work, and use prewriting to generate more ideas, trying a different prewriting strategy from the one you used previously. A new strategy may help you see your narrowed topic from a different perspective. If your second prewriting does not produce better results, consider refocusing or changing your topic.

#### ESSAY IN PROGRESS 1

If you used a prewriting strategy to generate details about your topic in response to Essay in Progress 3 in Chapter 4, review your prewriting, highlight useful ideas, and identify several sets of related details among those you have highlighted.

## Draft a Working Thesis Statement

Use the following guidelines as you draft, evaluate, and revise your working thesis:

1. **An effective thesis makes an assertion.** Rather than stating a simple, obvious fact, a thesis should take a position, express a viewpoint, or suggest your approach toward the topic.

**Lacks an Assertion** Hollywood movies, like *Loving* and *Rocketman*, are frequently based on true stories.

**Revised: Makes an Assertion** Hollywood movies, like *Loving* and *Rocketman*, manipulate true stories to cater to the tastes of the audience.

2. **An effective thesis is specific.** Provide as much information as possible about your main point.

**Too General** I learned a great deal from my experiences as a teenage parent.

**Revised: More Specific** From my experiences as a teenage parent, I learned to accept responsibility for my own life and for that of my son.

EXERCISE 5.1 IDENTIFYING AND REVISING THESIS STATEMENTS THAT LACK SPECIFIC ASSERTIONS

First, determine which of the following draft thesis statements are effective and which make a simple statement of fact or are overly general. Then revise each unsatisfactory thesis, making it into an effective thesis for a brief (two- to four-page) college writing assignment.

- 1. Students overspend during the holiday season.
- 2. The viewers were moved by pictures of the devastation in Haiti following Hurricane Matthew.
- 3. Academic integrity is a problem on college campuses because many students cheat on assignments.
- 4. Taking a class online can be convenient, but succeeding in online classes requires self-discipline and motivation.
- 5. As a result of taking care of her family’s dog, Adrian developed a strong desire to rescue abandoned pit bulls.

EXERCISE 5.2 IDENTIFYING AND REVISING OVERLY GENERAL THESIS STATEMENTS

First, determine which of the following thesis statements are too general for a brief (two- to four-page) college-level writing assignment. Then narrow the overly general thesis statements using the strategies for narrowing topics discussed in Chapter 4.

- 1. Unfortunately, discrimination exists in many forms in today’s society.
- 2. The demands of my job undermined my relationship with my family.
- 3. The experience of living in a dorm provides students with opportunities to develop valuable people skills that will serve them well throughout their lives.
- 4. Violent storms can have devastating effects on communities.
- 5. Although it seemed unwise at the time, postponing college was one of the wisest decisions I ever made.

3. **Focus on one central point.** Limit your essay to one major idea.

<b>Focuses on Several Points</b>	This college should improve its tutoring services, sponsor more activities of interest to Latino students, and speed up the registration process for students.
<b>Revised: Focuses on One Point</b>	To better represent the student population it serves, this college should sponsor more activities of interest to Latino students.

4. **Offer an original perspective on your topic.** If your thesis seems dull or ordinary, it probably needs revision. Search your prewriting for an interesting angle on your topic.

<b>Too Ordinary</b>	Many traffic accidents are a result of carelessness.
<b>Revised: More Interesting</b>	An automobile accident can change a driver’s entire approach to driving.

**EXERCISE 5.3****IDENTIFYING AND REVISING THESIS STATEMENTS THAT  
FOCUS ON SEVERAL POINTS**

The following thesis statements focus on more than one central point. Revise them so that each focuses clearly on only one point.

1. In order to be more successful in college, students must learn time management strategies, curtail their social life during the week, and learn to balance work and school obligations so that they are able to enjoy all parts of their life.
2. The Internet has revolutionized the way friends communicate, but it has also made children more sedentary, which has had negative health effects, and it has also made people in the workforce more solitary, which has undermined teamwork.
3. Movie theaters continue to attract viewers to new releases, although many of them are simply remakes of older movies and ones that appeal only to those who like graphic violence.
4. Although the tornado destroyed the entire town and seriously injured hundreds of people, the local townspeople grew closer as they tended to the injured, helped to rebuild houses, and shared their financial resources with one another.
5. Although the company has made strides in repairing its reputation in the community, it still needs to pay its employees a fair salary, restructure management, and conduct business with more reputable vendors.

- 
5. **Avoid making an announcement.** Don't use phrases such as "This essay will discuss" or "The subject of my paper is." Instead, state your main point directly. (Note that some disciplines do encourage writers to announce their thesis statements directly, but in the humanities it is frowned upon. Check with your instructor if you are not sure.)

**Makes an Announcement**     The point I am trying to make is that people should not be allowed to smoke on campus.

**Revised: States Main Point Directly**     The college should prohibit smoking on campus.

6. **Use your thesis to preview the organization of the essay.** Consider using your thesis to mention the two or three key concepts on which your essay will focus, in the order in which you will discuss them.

**Lacks Preview**     A charity fund-raising event requires careful organization and planning.

**Revised: Previews Organization**     A charity fund-raising event requires careful organization and planning, including choosing a venue, gathering materials, managing costs, and publicizing the event.



EXERCISE 5.4 EVALUATING THESIS STATEMENTS

Working in a group of two or three students, discuss what is wrong with each of the following thesis statements. Then revise each thesis to make it more effective.

- 1. In this paper, I will discuss the causes of asthma, which include exposure to smoke, chemicals, and allergic reactions.
- 2. Spinning classes are an enjoyable form of exercise.
- 3. The crime rate is falling in many U.S. cities.
- 4. Living in an apartment has many advantages.
- 5. Children’s toys can be dangerous, instructional, or creative.

ESSAY IN PROGRESS 2

Keeping your audience in mind, select one or more of the groups of ideas you identified in Essay in Progress 1. Write a working thesis statement based on these ideas.

# Place the Thesis Statement Effectively

Your thesis statement can appear anywhere in your essay, but it is usually best to place it in the first paragraph as part of your introduction. When your thesis appears at the beginning of the essay, your readers will know what to pay attention to and what to expect in the rest of the essay. If you place your thesis later in the essay, you need to build up to it gradually in order to prepare readers for it.

HOW WRITERS READ IDENTIFYING AND USING THE THESIS STATEMENT

Just as you express the main point of an essay in a thesis statement, so do most of the writers you will read in this text and in your other assigned reading. The strategies here will help you identify the thesis statement and use it to guide your reading.

BEFORE READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Preview the title, introduction, and conclusion to identify the subject of the reading, and then predict the thesis the writer may develop.</li></ul>
WHILE READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify the actual thesis. Does it confirm your prediction? If you have trouble identifying the thesis, ask yourself, “What is the most important idea the writer wants to express about the subject?” Then look for a sentence that states this point.</li><li>• Use the thesis statement to help you draw a blueprint of the essay: Think of the thesis statement as the roof; how do the reasons and key evidence the writer supplies support the thesis?</li></ul>
AFTER READING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Paraphrase the thesis. If you cannot, this is a sign that you do not really understand the essay. (You may suffer from what psychologists of learning call the “illusion of knowing.”) Reread the selection, or consult the “Just-in-Time Guide to Reading and Responding” for help.</li></ul>

In narrative or descriptive essays, writers may not state the thesis directly. Instead, the thesis may be strongly implied by the details. Although some professional writers use an implied thesis, academic writers, including professors and students, generally state their thesis directly. Check with your instructor if you are unsure whether you need to include an explicit thesis.

# Support Your Thesis Statement with Evidence

After you have written a working thesis statement, the next step is to develop evidence that supports your thesis. **Evidence** is any type of information, such as examples and anecdotes, facts and statistics, or expert opinion, that will convince your reader that your thesis is reasonable or correct.

## Tailor the Evidence to Your Writing Situation

Your writing situation—that is, your purpose, audience, point of view, genre, and medium—will determine which types of evidence will be most effective. For example:

- If your purpose is to persuade, using comparison and contrast to highlight advantages and disadvantages, giving examples of problems, citing statistics to support your claim, and using quotations from experts may help make your argument convincing.
- If your audience is unfamiliar with your topic, providing definitions, historical background, an explanation of a process, and factual and descriptive details may be necessary.

Table 5.1 (p. 130) lists various types of evidence and gives examples of how each type could be used to support a working thesis on acupuncture. **Note:** Many of the types of evidence correspond to the patterns of development discussed in Parts 3 and 4.

### EXERCISE 5.5

### CHOOSING THE BEST EVIDENCE FOR YOUR WRITING SITUATION

1. In groups of two or three students, discuss and list the types of evidence that could be used to support the following thesis statement for an informative essay:

The need to become financially independent is a challenge for many young adults and often causes them to develop social and emotional problems.

2. For each audience below, discuss and record the types of evidence that would offer the best support for the preceding thesis.
  - a. Young adults
  - b. Parents of young adults
  - c. Counselors of young adults



**TABLE 5.1** Types of Evidence Used to Support a Thesis

<b>Working Thesis:</b>	Acupuncture, a form of alternative medicine, is becoming more widely accepted in the United States.
<b>Types of Evidence</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Definitions</b>	Explain that in acupuncture, needles are inserted into specific points of the body to control pain or relieve symptoms.
<b>Historical Background</b>	Explain that acupuncture is a medical treatment that originated in ancient China.
<b>Explanation of a Process</b>	Explain the principles on which acupuncture is based and how scientists think it works.
<b>Factual Details</b>	Explain who uses acupuncture, on what parts of the body it is used, and under what circumstances it is applied.
<b>Descriptive Details</b>	Explain what acupuncture needles look and feel like.
<b>Narrative Story</b>	Relate a personal experience that illustrates the use of acupuncture.
<b>Causes or Effects</b>	Discuss one or two theories that explain why acupuncture works. Offer reasons for its increasing popularity.
<b>Classification</b>	Explain types of acupuncture treatments.
<b>Comparison and Contrast</b>	Compare acupuncture with other forms of alternative medicine, such as massage and herbal medicines. Explain how acupuncture differs from these other treatments.
<b>Advantages and Disadvantages</b>	Describe the pros (nonsurgical, relatively painless) and cons (fear of needles) of acupuncture.
<b>Examples</b>	Describe situations in which acupuncture has been used successfully—by dentists, in treating alcoholism, for pain control.
<b>Problems</b>	Explain that acupuncture is not always practiced by medical doctors; licensing and oversight of acupuncturists may thus be lax.
<b>Statistics</b>	Indicate how many acupuncturists practice in the United States.
<b>Quotations</b>	Quote medical experts who attest to the effectiveness of acupuncture.

**Collect Evidence to Support Your Thesis**

Select one or more of the following suggestions to generate evidence that supports your thesis:

1. Create a two-column worksheet; list types of evidence in the left column and provide examples that support your thesis in the right column. Collect evidence only for the types that are appropriate for your thesis.

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2. Picture yourself speaking to your audience. What would you say to convince your audience of your thesis? Jot down ideas as they come to you.
3. Develop a skeletal outline of major headings. Leave plenty of blank space under each heading, and fill in ideas about each heading as they come to you.
4. Draw a graphic organizer of your essay, filling in supporting evidence as you think of it.
5. Discuss your thesis statement with a classmate; try to explain why he or she should accept your thesis as valid.

For more on outlining and drawing a graphic organizer, see Chapter 7.

### ESSAY IN PROGRESS 3

Using the preceding list of suggestions and Table 5.1, generate at least three different types of evidence to support the working thesis statement you wrote in Essay in Progress 2.

## Choose the Best Evidence

In collecting evidence in support of a thesis, you will probably generate more than you need. Consequently, you will need to identify the evidence that (1) best supports your thesis and (2) best suits your purpose and audience:

1. **Make sure the evidence is relevant.** All of your evidence must clearly and directly support your thesis. Irrelevant evidence will distract and puzzle (or annoy) your readers. If your thesis is that acupuncture is useful for controlling pain, you would not need to describe other alternative therapies.
2. **Provide specific evidence.** Avoid general statements that will not help you make a convincing case for your thesis. For instance, to support the thesis that acupuncture is becoming more widely accepted by patients in the United States, citing statistics that demonstrate an increase in the number of practicing acupuncturists in the United States over the past five years would be most convincing. (You may need to return to your prewriting or conduct research to find evidence for your thesis.)
3. **Offer a variety of evidence.** Using different kinds of evidence increases the likelihood that your evidence will convince your readers. If you provide only four examples of people who have found acupuncture helpful, for instance, your readers may conclude that four people's experiences do not mean that acupuncture is becoming more popular nationally. If you also provide statistics and quotations from experts, however, more readers will be likely to accept your thesis. Using different types of evidence also enhances your credibility, showing readers you are well informed about your topic. The "Types of Evidence" checklist below lists a number of evidence types. Use it to determine whether the evidence you are offering is varied enough.
4. **Provide a sufficient amount of evidence.** The amount of evidence you need varies according to your audience and your topic. To discover whether you have provided enough evidence, ask a classmate to read your essay and tell you whether he or she is convinced. If your reader is not convinced, ask him or her what additional evidence is needed.
5. **Provide representative evidence.** Do not provide unusual, rare, or exceptional situations as evidence. Suppose your thesis is that acupuncture is widely used for various types of surgery. An example of one person who underwent painless

For more about choosing reliable evidence, see Chapter 20. For more on conducting, incorporating, and citing research, see Chapters 21 and 22.

heart surgery using only acupuncture will not support your thesis unless the use of acupuncture in heart surgery is common. Including such an example would mislead your reader and may bring your credibility into question.

6. **Provide accurate evidence from reliable sources.** Do not make vague statements, guess at statistics, or make estimates. For example, do not simply say that many medical doctors are licensed to practice acupuncture in the United States or estimate the number. Instead, find out exactly how many U.S. physicians are licensed for this practice.

Checklist: Types of Evidence

Use this checklist to make sure you are offering a variety of evidence in support of your thesis.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historical background                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Comparison and contrast     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Factual details (facts, statistics)                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Classification              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Narration (a story or anecdote)                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Definitions                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Descriptive details (details that appeal to the senses) | <input type="checkbox"/> Causes or effects           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Examples  | <input type="checkbox"/> Advantages or disadvantages |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Explanation of a process                                | <input type="checkbox"/> Problems                    |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Quotations                  |

Academic Writing: Choosing Evidence

For most kinds of academic writing, certain types of evidence are preferred over others. In general, your personal experiences and opinions are not considered as useful as more objective evidence such as facts, statistics, historical background, and expert testimony.

Suppose you are writing an academic paper on the effects of global warming. Your observations about climate changes in your city would not be considered adequate or appropriate evidence to support the idea of climate change as an effect of global warming. To support your thesis, you would need to provide facts, statistics, and expert testimony on climate change in a wide geographic area and demonstrate their relationship to global warming.

ESSAY IN PROGRESS 4

Evaluate the evidence you generated in Essay in Progress 3. Select the evidence that you could use to support your thesis in a two- to four-page essay for a college class.

Academic Writing: Integrating Evidence from Sources

For many academic writing assignments, you will use evidence from sources to support your thesis. You can include source information in three ways: as a quotation, a paraphrase, or a summary.

1. A **quotation** uses the exact words of your source. Use a quotation when the information or idea cannot be as clearly, accurately, or compellingly expressed in your words (for example, if you are borrowing information that is highly technical or conveyed in a particularly engaging way).
2. A **paraphrase** expresses an author's idea in your own words and sentences. Use a paraphrase when the information and ideas are important, but the exact wording is not.
3. A **summary** condenses a passage into a concise format, capturing the main point and leaving out the details. Use a summary when you want to convey the gist of the information.

You should mostly use paraphrases and summaries to make sure your voice predominates; quotations should be used sparingly.

Regardless of whether you quote, paraphrase, or summarize a source, introduce a source with a signal phrase (or attribution). A **signal phrase** includes

- the author's name
- a verb that reflects the "move" the author is making

Also include enough information about the source for your readers to understand its value and a page reference so that readers can find the information for themselves if they're interested in learning more. Later references to a source in a signal phrase can include just the author's last name.

### Examples

Olivia Berafato, a professor of chemical engineering, explains . . . (p. XX).

Constitutional law attorney Alan Dershowitz argues that ". . ." (p. XX).

In her book *You Just Don't Understand*, linguist Deborah Tannen theorizes . . . (p. XX).

Once you present and cite source information, make clear what it means, why it is relevant, and how it supports the point you are making. You must also give credit to all those from whom you borrow information and ideas by including a source citation in your list of works cited or references.

For more information about paraphrasing and summarizing effectively, see Chapter 22; to learn more about integrating quotations effectively, see Chapter 23.

See the section "Academic Writing: Crafting a Research 'Sandwich'" (Chapter 6) for a sample research paragraph. Chapter 23 provides additional information about citing sources in the text and in a list of works cited or references.

## Incorporate Visuals into an Essay

Today's readers are used to seeing more than words on a page, and since your task is to engage readers and communicate meaning effectively, using appropriate visuals may help. Visuals can enhance your essay and contribute to its meaning by

- offering an example
- conveying information more clearly or concisely than you could in words
- eliciting a response or reaction from readers
- providing emphasis
- sparking interest

Of course, including visuals is not appropriate in every writing situation, nor is a visual a substitute for an explanation. And including a visual that is merely decorative is rarely appropriate, especially in academic writing. (Your instructor can advise you if you are unsure about whether including a visual is appropriate.)

The excerpt from a student essay in Figure 5.1 (p. 135) illustrates how to use a visual effectively and how to integrate it into an essay. The photograph in the sample page in Figure 5.1 achieves several purposes:

- It offers an example of altruism among animals of different species.
- It creates visual interest.
- It lends emphasis to the essay's thesis—that animals exhibit emotions, including altruism.

## Select Appropriate Visuals

See Chapter 3, for more about reading visuals actively and critically.

Use the following guidelines to choose effective and reliable visuals:

1. **Use visuals to illustrate important ideas in your essay.** Illustrations should offer support for your thesis or the topic sentence of the paragraph in which they appear. For example, you might include a photograph of a painting you are analyzing or a visual example that supports the point you are making in a paragraph (as in the sample page in Figure 5.1). You may also include a chart, table, or graph that allows you to convey a large amount of data clearly and succinctly.
2. **Use visuals that are appropriate given your audience.** Use visuals that are appropriate to your writing situation and that your audience will understand and appreciate. (For example, it would be inappropriate to include visuals that are merely decorative in a college essay.) Visuals should be avoided if they require prior knowledge your audience lacks or they make a point that could be more easily conveyed in words.
3. **Use visuals that are consistent with your method of development.** For example, a descriptive essay might include a photograph, a comparison-and-contrast essay might include a bar graph, a classification or division essay might include a table or pie chart, and a process essay might feature a diagram or flowchart.
4. **Avoid misleading visuals.** Make sure the data used to create charts and graphs are reliable and that photographs do not distort or misrepresent the subjects. Visuals from sources such as well-respected news organizations or government agencies are generally reliable.

To incorporate a visual effectively within your essay, reference the visual (*for example, see Fig. 1*) and briefly explain its intended message. Place the visual as close after the reference in the text as possible to ensure readers can connect the visual with the part of the text in which it is discussed. Include the figure number and a brief explanatory caption below.

One final word of caution: Unless the visual is a photograph you took or a graphic created from data you collected, you must credit the source. For academic papers, include complete source information at the end of the caption (unless your instructor provides other instructions).

**FIGURE 5.1** Integrating Visuals into an Academic Essay

Sympathy and caring have been noted in non-primate species as well. Researchers have found that young barn owls are “impressively generous” toward each other, saving portions of their food for smaller and hungrier owls (Angier). Likewise, the *Nature* episode “Animal Odd Couples” documents a number of instances in which animals of one species have cared for animals of another. In one example, Jack, a goat, led Charlie, a blind horse, around the ranch where they lived every day for sixteen years, until Jack’s death (Fig. 1). The animals’ caretaker even compared Jack to the television character Lassie, describing how Jack got human help to rescue Charlie after he became trapped in a grove of trees following a microburst of wind.



Fig. 1. Seeing is believing: Jack leading Charlie (a blind horse). Film still from “Animal Odd Couples” (27:23), *Nature* (PBS, 7 Nov. 2012).

What makes this example particularly noteworthy is that the animals were of different species. Had the goat been helping another goat, it would be easy to assume that the act of caring was the result of what scientists call *genetic altruism*, animals helping others of their own species because there is something in it for them—namely, the assurance that their kin (and, therefore, their genes) will continue. This theory certainly provides an adequate,

Identifies source

Introduces and explains the visual

Includes figure number (abbreviated “Fig.” in MLA style) in text and caption

Topic sentence supports thesis/ references example



## STUDENTS WRITE

In the Students Write section of Chapter 4, you saw how Latrisha Wilson narrowed her topic and generated ideas for her essay on surveillance. You also saw how she explored types of surveillance as they affect her privacy. After reviewing her responses to questions about her topic and her freewriting, Wilson drafted the following working thesis.

These new digital technologies have both benefits and drawbacks.

She realized that her thesis was overly general and too broad, so she did more freewriting and brainstorming to help her recall details about types of surveillance. Here's an excerpt from her brainstorming:

- Spies like James Bond are no longer necessary. Movies and video games fool us into believing they are, but mainly spying is done by computers.
- The National Security Agency (NSA) watches everything we do on the Internet and everything we say on our phones.
- Edward Snowden, the NSA whistleblower, was a newsmaker. He exposed the NSA's secret surveillance.
- Google has access to everything about us, and they sell the information to other companies.
- If we want to communicate through a screen or a phone, we have to give up our privacy.
- We seldom are asked for our consent to share information about ourselves.
- Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, Facebook, and other new media also provide lots of information about our daily lives, and not just to our "friends."
- Because we enjoy sharing our lives and learning about the lives of others, we forget about where the information is going.
- In reality, we have very little privacy if we use digital devices.

After brainstorming, she decided that she should focus on the drawbacks of digital communications technology. She narrowed her thesis even further to focus on the subtle forms of surveillance new communications technology enable:

Often advertised as free services, new ways of communicating put us under more invasive but less obvious forms of surveillance.

## READING

## Internet Addiction

Greg Beato

The following essay by Greg Beato was first published in 2010 in *Reason*, a magazine that offers updates on current developments in politics and culture from a libertarian perspective. Beato, a contributing editor for *Reason*, supports the essay's thesis with a

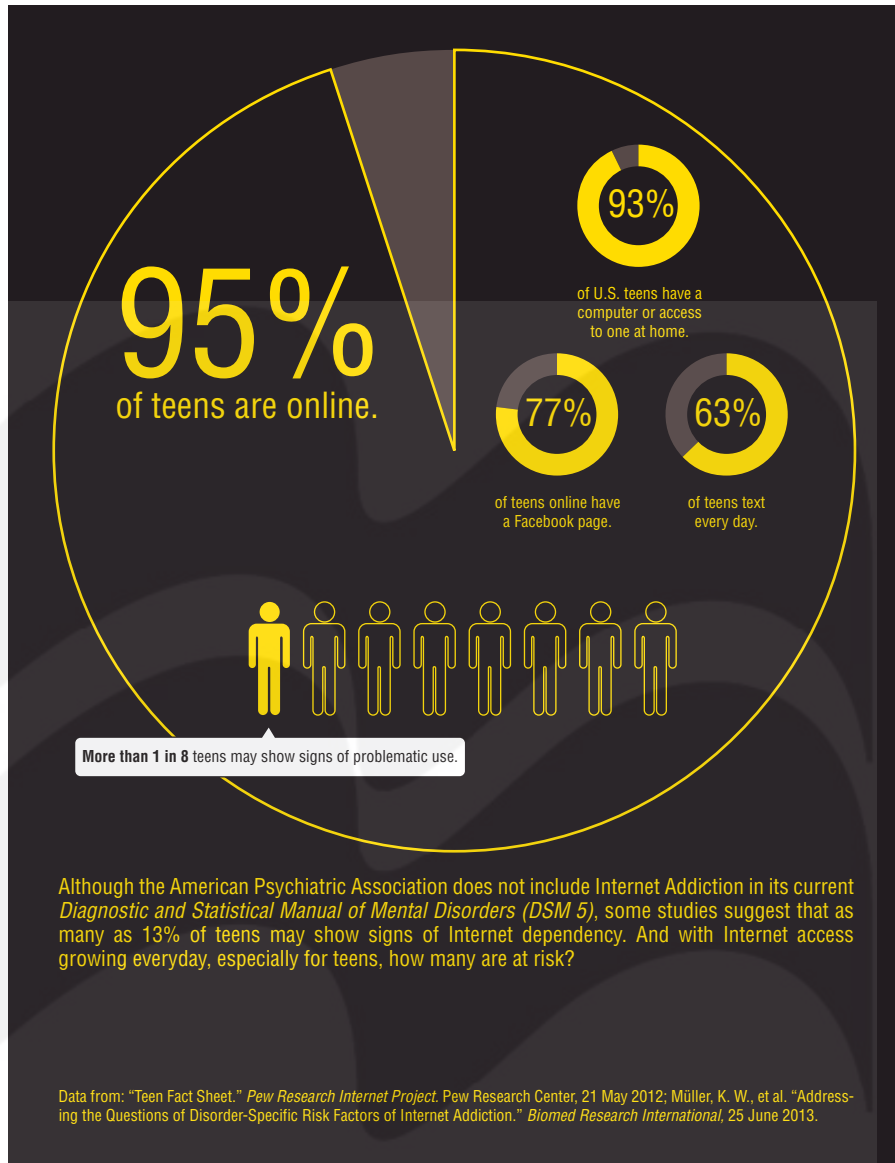
variety of evidence. As you read, highlight the thesis statement and notice the types of evidence used to support it.

**Before Reading**

1. **Preview** Use the steps listed in the “Preview” section in Chapter 2.
2. **Connect** What does *addiction* mean in this context, and what kinds of Internet use does Beato mean?

**While Reading** Pay particular attention to Beato’s thesis and the evidence he provides to support it.

READING DELETED FOR  
PERMISSIONS PURPOSES



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READING DELETED FOR  
PERMISSIONS PURPOSES

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## READING DELETED FOR PERMISSIONS PURPOSES

12

### Examining the Reading

1. **Definition** Define the term *Internet addiction*.
2. **Examples** What are some examples of dangerous behavior caused by Internet addiction?
3. **Meaning** Why does adding Internet addiction to the *DSM* have important social consequences?
4. **Vocabulary** Define each of the following words as they are used in the essay: *parody* (para. 1), *pathological* (2), *nihilistic* (7), *lurid* (8), and *specter* (9).

### Analyzing the Writer's Technique

1. **Thesis** State the author's thesis in your own words. Then, using the guidelines on pages 125–28, evaluate the effectiveness of the thesis.
2. **Rhetorical Situation** To what audience does Beato address this essay? What purpose does the essay fulfill? How do you think the writing situation affects the author's choice of evidence?
3. **Support** Cite one paragraph from the essay in which you think the author provides detailed, specific information. Explain why you chose that paragraph. Does it support the thesis? Why or why not?

### Visualizing the Reading

In the chart below, supply an example of each type of evidence the author has used in the reading. The first one has been done for you.

Type of Evidence	Example
Historical Background	Website parody of the <i>DSM</i> in 1995 included Internet addiction and 1996 McLean Hospital program for Internet addiction
Descriptive Details	
Statistics	
Examples	
Comparison and Contrast	
Quotations	

## Thinking Critically about the Reading

1. **Sources** Evaluate the sources that Beato uses to support his thesis. Are they trustworthy and reliable?
2. **Tone** Describe the author's tone. How does the tone affect your response to the reading?
3. **Opinion** Identify at least one statement of opinion in paragraph 9. Does the author offer evidence to support the opinion?
4. **Connotation** What is the connotation of the word *junkies* in paragraph 6? Identify at least four other words in the selection with strong positive or negative connotations.
5. **Evaluation** How useful are the anecdotes in paragraphs 7 and 8 as evidence?

For more about connotation and tone, see "Analyze the Author's Language" in Chapter 3 and "Analyze Your Word Choice" in Chapter 9; for more about distinguishing facts and opinions, see "Distinguish Fact from Opinion" in Chapter 3.

## Interpreting a Graphic

1. **Meaning** The text below the large pie chart on page 138 reports that "13% of teens may show signs of Internet dependency," and the pictogram says that "more than 1 in 8 teens may show signs of problematic use." What is the difference between the terms *dependency* and *problematic use*?
2. **Source** How reliable do the sources for this graphic seem? What other sources might you use for a paper on Internet dependency among teens?

## Responding to the Reading

1. **Audience** How do you think this essay would change if the author wrote it for *Parents* magazine?
2. **Discussion** Why do you think the number of people addicted to the Internet has actually lessened since 1998? What might it mean that the American Psychological Association is not ready to include Internet addiction in the *DSM*? What does this say about the disorder?



3. **Journal** In your journal, write about ways you use the Internet that may not be healthy. How does it negatively affect your life? Do you feel it has more positive than negative effects on your life? Explain.

### Working Together

1. Imagine that you and a classmate are authors of an advice column for your college newspaper. Write a letter responding to a reader who asked for advice about kicking her Internet addiction. Working with your partner, draft a one-paragraph reply, suggesting steps the person can take to break free of her addiction. Be creative in your response. Be prepared to share your advice with the class.
2. Working with two or three of your classmates, spend five to ten minutes brainstorming a list of positive and negative effects of Internet use among college students. Then write a thesis statement based on the ideas you generated. Compare your list with the lists of other groups in the class.