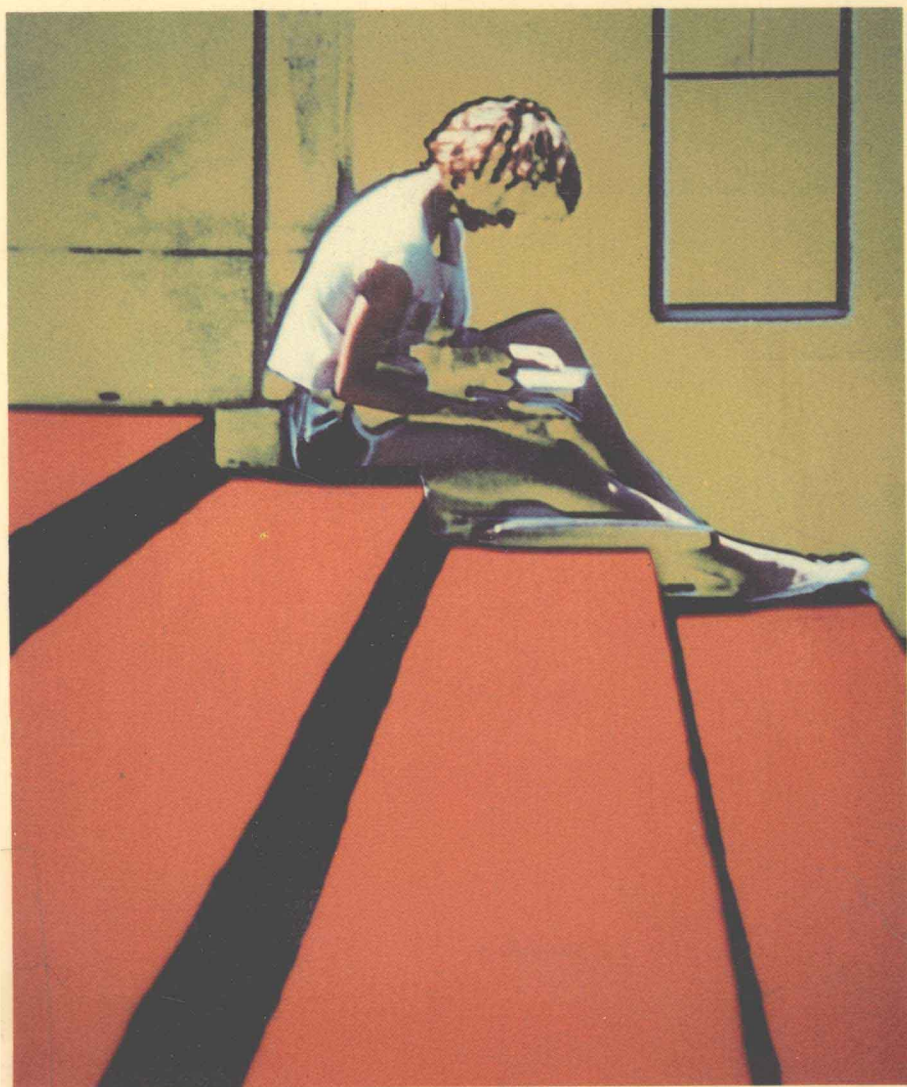


# MAKING CONNECTIONS ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Readings for Analysis



# Making Connections Across the Curriculum

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## *Readings for Analysis*

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## Preface for Instructors

Since college writing is largely analytical writing, we've constructed this reader to provide diverse analytical opportunities. We've chosen readings that range widely across the curriculum, clustered them around ten academically representative and socially important topics, and drawn on our separate experiences using these materials in the classroom. Most of the readings are themselves examples of effective analytical writing, yet their main function is to provide contexts for the analytical writing of students.

These chapters are cross-curricular in a special sense. Rather than compile a miscellany of writing from various disciplines, we have sought out topics on which various disciplines converge. The readings reveal important differences among disciplines — in attitude, language, emphasis, and perspective. But they also show that much good academic writing is interdisciplinary and that analytical thinking works in similar ways across the university.

The clusters of readings increase the analytical possibilities. Of course, each selection can be analyzed on its own terms, but two or more selections can also be examined in relation to one another. And, as a group, a chapter's readings can contribute to an informed analysis of a general issue or problem. Too often, students lack either a context in which to read an essay or a critical perspective from which to evaluate it. The clustered readings provide a fuller base of information, and, more importantly, their varying perspectives encourage independent thinking.

The ten chapters have been compiled and edited by teachers who have based entire composition courses on these topics. We think this amplitude makes for flexibility. Some teachers will want to dip into a chapter to look at a single essay or to select a convenient pairing for purposes of comparison. Others may want to assign entire chapters as background for looking at a few pieces in detail. Still others may want to use a chapter in a sustained way — working through all its readings, developing a sequence of intermediate assignments, and arriving at a project requiring student research.

The book's apparatus is meant to enhance this flexibility. The "Considerations" that follow each reading offer ways of approaching that reading on its own. "Connections" questions, which come next, suggest ways of analyzing one text in relation to another. "Further Connections" at the end of each chapter call upon the readings as a group, and "Extensions" suggest promising and manageable research options. All four types of questions have been conceived as writing assignments. Most of the early questions are also adaptable for class discussions, or for work in small groups. We've found that using one or two questions to prompt some preliminary writing is a good way to get students analytically engaged.

**Acknowledgments**

As teachers in the UCLA Writing Programs, we have benefited from a collegial atmosphere and administrative encouragement. We have appreciated the enthusiasm and example of Executive Director Richard A. Lanham, the program's initiator and presiding influence; the steadiness and flexibility of Carol P. Hartzog, Director who enabled us to develop the sorts of courses represented here; and the high standard set by Mike Rose, director of Freshman English, whose commitment to intellectually challenging assignments has influenced this book throughout.

Besides our general debts, we have accumulated specific ones. For their helpful reviews of the book's readings and apparatus, we'd like to thank Dave Bartholomae, University of Pittsburgh; Patricia Bizzell, College of the Holy Cross; Richard Brucher, University of Maine, Orono; David Jolliffe, University of Illinois at Chicago; Carol MacKay, University of Texas at Austin; and Donald McQuade, University of California at Berkeley. For further suggestions and advice, we'd like to thank Michael Foley, Dan Hawkes, Mark Infusino, Stephen M. Jones, John Klancher, Michael D. Moore, Howard J. Nelson, John Ollinger, Elizabeth Silver, Jack Solomon, Ivan Strenski, Allan J. Tobin, Linda Venis, and Donald J. Ward.

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# Introduction for Students

The readings in this book are aimed at good college writing — yours. Its title and subtitle convey the major emphases: “Readings for Analysis” because most college writing is analytical writing; “Making Connections” because connection-making is at the heart of all analysis, whether it be among the parts of a single reading, between one reading and another, or between the text and something else you know or think; “Across the Curriculum” because a writing course that emphasizes making connections can be the best introduction to the many varied fields that college opens up.

The readings in each chapter are grouped about a single topic of interest to several academic fields. Working with a specific topic over a period of time and from varying points of view increases the analytical opportunities. Each reading can be analyzed on its own terms: what does it say, how is it structured, how does it work upon readers? But each reading also can be analyzed in relation to others in the chapter: how does it compare, what does it add to our understanding, which ideas does it help support or refute, how else might it be seen, what else might it help us see better? The more you read in each chapter, the more you learn and the more perspectives you have for viewing. Points of view are apt to vary widely within a single field. No two urban planners, for example, are likely to diagnose the problems of modern cities in quite the same way. But points of view are apt to differ even more sharply and in more interesting ways as we move from one discipline to another — from the way an economic historian, for example, looks at urban problems to the way a social psychologist does.

## ***Academic Points of View: An Illustration***

To illustrate the range and variety of points of view within the university, it helps to imagine how a topic might appear from several different academic perspectives. To choose a topic everyone has some interest in, take sex. Sex can occupy a larger or smaller part of our mental landscape, depending on our distance and what else we see. Along academic lines of vision, too, sex can appear relatively inconsequential, or it can loom large. For physicists, mathematicians, astronomers, and geologists — professionally speaking, at least — it is a topic of little interest (though a geologist might object that a successful history of sexual relationships is embedded in several strata of formerly organic rock). For biologists, by contrast, it is a topic impossible to avoid: genetics, ecology, evolution, animal behavior, to say nothing of the direct study of reproductive mechanisms in plants and animals, all entail thinking about sex and its implications. Chemists, on the other hand, are free to ignore sex or study it; some



biochemists specialize in such topics as the chemical interaction of egg and sperm, the functioning of human sex hormones like estrogen and testosterone, or the sexual messages transmitted among animals by the molecular formations called pheromones.

The arts approach a topic like sex from diverse points of view. In the visual arts, the nude, for instance, is a traditional subject for painters, who have treated unclothed bodies with every nuance of feeling from adoration to indifference to revulsion. The entire field of sculpture, which until modern times consisted primarily of representations of the human form, is sensitive to sexual interpretations since clothed or unclothed, at rest or astride horses, statues of human figures often have sexual overtones. As with the visual arts, the study of literature can turn frequently toward sexual themes — not only in the vast body of poetry, drama, and fiction for which sexual emotion provides an important current, but in the many other works where it is an unsettling presence. There is also a tendency in some literary criticism to read into apparently nonsexual works — the poetry of Emily Dickinson or the sea fiction of Joseph Conrad — an undercurrent of disguised, perhaps unconscious, sexual feelings. The study of music, by contrast, is less apt to turn toward sexual themes, particularly when the emphasis is placed more on musical forms and techniques than on the lives of composers. But it is difficult to talk about opera, where plots almost always hinge on sexual melodrama and male and female voices continually compete, cooperate, and merge, without taking account of the sexual component.

The social sciences also approach the topic of sex in varied ways. Many psychologists, especially those influenced by Sigmund Freud, see sexuality as the great creative and disruptive force in mental life. Clinical and experimental psychologists are likely to view sex more neutrally, as merely one feature of human behavior, but they find sexual differences between male and female behavior particularly worth studying. Sociologists, whose interests center on how groups influence individuals, stress not so much how sex influences our behavior as how sexual behavior is channeled by social influences like family, marriage, and peer pressure. Anthropologists are more likely to compare the sexual customs of one culture with those of others as part of the general effort to distinguish between behavior common to all humans and behavior bound to particular times and places. Economists are apt to deemphasize sex altogether — partly because for them sexual motives seem unimportant compared to financial ones, but mostly because economists restrict themselves to the more measurable aspects of supply and demand. Still, some sexual matters do lend themselves to economic analysis: prostitution, for example, can be studied like any other business by analyzing the costs and benefits to suppliers and consumers.

Historians, by contrast, may look at sex closely or from a distance: most political historians will turn to a sexual explanation only where absolutely necessary (like the influence upon English politics of King Henry VIII's many wives); cultural historians, by contrast, may see in the general patterns of shifting sexual attitudes indications of meaningful historical change. Similarly, political scientists studying international and national relationships seldom stress sexual themes, while at the grass-roots level "sexual politics" (like office poli-

tics) are increasingly taken into account. Finally, women's studies programs, a recent cross-curricular development on many college campuses, draw upon all of these other disciplines in seeking to understand the social consequences of sexual differences.

The ten topics that form the chapters of this book, though not so widely embracing as sex, have been chosen for their social importance and their cross-curricular appeal. Some, like *The Dimensions of Power*, span numerous academic fields, while others, like *The Frontier Indians*, are the concern of people in fields that are themselves strongly interdisciplinary. All of the chapters — on power, the nuclear arms race, Indians, cities, work, learning, intelligence, cancer, animals, and the fairy tale — are meant to stimulate interests that cannot be readily confined to a single area of study. Each set of readings is designed to help you think flexibly and forcefully about a complex topic, one capable of stirring good analytical writing.

What do we mean by *analysis*? The word has a wide range of associations in differing academic contexts. A literature student asked to analyze a poem may feel little in common with a chemistry student analyzing an unknown solution or a business student analyzing a management decision. But any analysis fits this general definition: analysis looks at something closely and from an informed point of view, expressing an interpretation which it attempts to defend.

Looking closely is important. To explain how something is structured or how it works, you need to see it in detail. Yet looking closely isn't enough. Imagine examining a detailed image of diseased human blood cells without knowing what you were looking for. An informed point of view enables you to look selectively, passing over some features in order to stress others, letting you judge what you see in the light of what you already know. Still, a knowledgeable general perspective is also not enough. You need some specific perception or idea to focus the rest of what you find important — an interpretation. Most importantly, you need to support that interpretation with persuasive reasoning and evidence. Good analytical writing makes its connections persuasively.

### ***Types of Analysis***

Let us describe some of the types of analytic connections you will be asked to make, beginning with single readings and proceeding to readings in combinations. For all types of analysis, you will need to be able to summarize: to distinguish a readings' main ideas from its lesser ones and to connect those main ideas in a brief but accurate restatement. Summaries can be difficult to compose, since they force you to make difficult judgments about which ideas are most important and how they should be connected. For that reason, they can be very valuable to write, even when you do not intend for others to read what you have written. Summaries are also valuable within essays: at openings, they can introduce the material to be analyzed; at key transition points, segments of summary can help reorient readers; at the conclusions of essays, they can consolidate main points. A summary alone, however, is seldom sufficient for analysis; it lacks an independent perception to clarify or defend. When



teachers criticize their students for producing “mere summary,” they are calling for essays that subordinate summaries to more fully analytical purposes.

One such purpose is to explain a writer’s basic thinking. What are the assumptions and reasoning at the center of that writer’s argument? Often a single question, if it is central enough, will focus attention on the most fundamental aspects of the writer’s argument. In Chapter 6, for example, after reading some of the educational recommendations of the philosopher John Locke, you are asked to explain why Locke favored imposing strict rules upon children. The question is a fundamental one, and answering it enables you to pass over many of Locke’s specific recommendations in order to focus instead upon his basic reasoning. Sometimes a writer’s assumptions and reasons will be fully laid out in the text; your analytical job will be simply to help a reader see the interconnections. At other times a writer’s basic thinking will seem obscure or flimsy; your job then becomes to explain what you find dissatisfying.

Some analyses explain why; others explain how. An essay that focuses upon how a text works is called rhetorical analysis. Simply put, rhetorical analysis means examining a writer’s use of language — choices in the organization of material, in sentence structure, in the selection of words. A rhetorical analysis of the selection from Charles Darwin’s *The Descent of Man* (in Chapter 9) might focus on the patient ways in which Darwin prepares the reader for his most controversial points. Or a rhetorical analysis might examine how Darwin’s use of figures of speech subtly contributes to his purposes, or how his word choices reveal him as a scientist of his own time rather than ours. Better still, a thorough rhetorical analysis might find a way to connect these several strands of observation within one central perception.

Another analytical approach is to concentrate upon a single contributory idea or theme. That idea may not be the writer’s main concern, but it is worth examining for the role it plays. Consider two examples. A theme we can find throughout Chapter 2, *The Origins of the Nuclear Arms Race*, is the troubled relationship between science and politics. An analytic approach to one of the documents in that chapter — for instance, the letter from physicist Niels Bohr to President Roosevelt — might focus on the influence of that theme. A theme we can trace in Chapter 10 is that of transformation. An analytical essay might compare the role played by sudden transformations in several variants of *Snow White*. Sometimes a thematic analysis will give prominence to a relatively minor feature of the text; in such cases the test is whether that feature can be connected to some larger interpretive issue. For example, an essay examining the recurrent mention of primary colors in “*Snow White*” might work well if connected to an idea about the clear-cut emotions of fairy tale characters.

Another approach is to analyze a reading from a fresh perspective. By trying out several ways of approaching a text, you can sometimes illuminate it in an unexpected way. For example, an anthropologist’s analysis of the significant events in the cancer operation described by Richard Selzer (Chapter 8) might look very different from the report of a fellow doctor: focusing on cultural behavior might suggest a different set of connections among events in the operating room. To discover a fresh point of view, it is not always necessary to go from one discipline to another, but it does help to be playful with ideas. Try

out a variety of points of view as you would try several differently tinted glasses before settling on the one you like best or rejecting them all.

Yet another analytic approach is to connect a reading with something else you know. Having read Machiavelli on political power, you might look at the operation of a corporation from a Machiavellian perspective. This type of analysis must maintain a kind of double focus. You need to demonstrate an accurate understanding of the reading, but you also need to choose a topic you know enough about to make interesting connections. Your choice need not fit the frame provided by the reading. In fact, a good analytical essay might demonstrate why Machiavelli has little to tell us about the operation of American business. But if you can find no connection at all between the reading and the topic you have chosen, you had better choose another topic. With a well chosen topic, this strategy of applying something you have read to something you know gives you the freedom to draw imaginatively on your own experience.

One last analytical approach of a text is to evaluate it. Actually, any analysis evaluates. You are evaluating when you select points worth emphasizing or when you defend any connection you have made. But the main point of an evaluative essay is to make judgments about quality. Assignments that ask you to evaluate, critique, or give your opinion force you to take a position about the effectiveness of a text. To evaluate Frederick Taylor's "Principles of Scientific Management" (Chapter 5), you need to arrive at some feeling about whether those principles are adequate. The rest of what you say will be designed to support your judgment. This does not mean you should ignore everything that does not support your opinion, but you will want to convince your reader that the contrary evidence is not sufficient to undermine your position. You will, however, need to treat your topic as one about which it is possible to disagree.

### ***Further Analytic Applications***

Up until now, we have been dealing with analyses based upon a single reading; but much academic analysis requires thinking about readings in relation to one another. Academic sophistication often depends on being willing and able to make such connections. Even so, writing about two or more readings is not necessarily any more difficult than writing about one. Most of the nuts-and-bolts work involves the same sorts of operations just described: summarizing texts, explaining their reasoning or rhetoric, tracing themes, adopting fresh perspectives, testing applications, defending opinions. The major difference is that when dealing with more than one reading, whatever else you choose to do in your essay will depend on your basic decision of how to connect the texts. Let us briefly describe three general ways in which readings can be connected.

First, there are the connections between generalization and example, between readings that offer theoretical explanations and those that illustrate or test those explanations. For instance, in the chapter on the urban experience (Chapter 4), social psychologist Stanley Milgram's discussion of city life can be used to analyze the main character in Shirley Jackson's story, "Pillar of Salt."

Applying one text to another is a tried and true analytical method, a method this book gives you plenty of opportunity to exercise. The exercise can become mechanical, however, if you assume that your job is always to find a compatible match between the generalizations and the specifics. Sometimes you may want to show that the theory is inadequate to explain the case or that the evidence better supports different generalizations.

Comparisons offer a second way of connecting texts. Instead of using one text as an instrument to probe another, a comparison treats the texts as equivalents. The data for comparative essays are the points of similarity and contrast you can discover in the readings. Still, collecting and arranging an assortment of these points is not enough. As with other analyses, your main need is to find a purposeful focus, a single idea capable of ordering your points. Sometimes the wording of an assignment will do some of the focusing for you, as when you are asked to compare Machiavelli and Freud's attitudes toward war. At other times the job of focusing the comparison falls entirely on you; you must grapple with the readings long enough to find a solid basis for comparison. In either situation, you will have to decide the direction of your essay. After establishing an initial basis of resemblance, most comparisons go on to bring out important differences. Some very effective comparisons, however, move in the opposite direction: after acknowledging the important ways in which the texts differ, the analysis proceeds to uncover fundamental correspondences.

A third possibility is to treat the texts as contributory evidence in developing your own generalizations. In Chapter 3 you are asked to draw on several historical accounts in developing your explanation of how the French, encountering the Indians, must have regarded their tribal shamans. A good essay of this type uses the texts in complementary ways, drawing upon the relevant parts of each to support the generalizations. At their most ambitious, such essays construct an original theory from evidence supplied by several texts.

The more readings you deal with, the less you will depend upon a single reading. The topic itself, not just the texts, becomes the object of analysis. In Chapter 7, *The Nature of Intelligence*, for example, you can respond to the challenge of identifying and addressing the ethical issues raised by brain and computer research. Equipped with more information and exposed to more points of view, you will find you have more of a basis to make your own judgments and to develop your own ideas.

Research brings even further opportunities to make original analytical connections. While it can be intimidating and tiring, research can also be fun, particularly if you have a fairly clear idea of what you are looking for. The best way to keep research manageable is to keep it subordinated to an analytic aim. One managed form of research involves locating a particular book or article and connecting it to your earlier readings. A second type of research employs tools like bibliographies and indexes to search out a select group of readings capable of extending the topic. A third takes you away from the library to "the field," where you can conduct your own observations or experiments and then analyze the results.

Our writing suggestions are arranged to approximate this movement toward analytical independence that we have described. In the "Considerations" that

follow each selection, we ask you to think about that reading in isolation. In "Connections," you are asked to think about that reading in relation to previous ones. At the end of each chapter "Further Connections" invite you to think freshly about the topic, making use of the readings you choose. Finally, "Extensions" and the accompanying "Suggestions for Further Reading" send you away from the book in search of further information and insights.

# **Making Connections Across the Curriculum**

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*Readings for Analysis*

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