

Writing Your
**JOURNAL
ARTICLE**
in
12 WEEKS

A Guide to Academic Publishing Success

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 **SAGE**

Los Angeles • London • New Delhi • Singapore • Washington DC



Week 8

Opening and Concluding Your Article

Day to Do Task	Week 8 Daily Writing Tasks	Estimated Task Time
Day 1 (Monday?)	Read through page 209 and discuss and revise your title; start documenting your time (page 219)	30 minutes
Day 2 (Tuesday?)	Revise your introduction (pages 209–216)	60 minutes
Day 3 (Wednesday?)	Revise your introduction (pages 209–216)	60 minutes
Day 4 (Thursday?)	Revisit your abstract, related literature review, and author order (pages 216–217)	60 minutes
Day 5 (Friday?)	Revise your conclusion (pages 217–218)	60 minutes

Above are the tasks for your eighth week. Some articles will need a lot of revising at this point; other articles will be fine. Schedule when you will write and then track the time that you actually spend writing.

SEVENTH WEEK IN REVIEW

You have now spent seven weeks working on your article. You have sharpened your argument and structured your article around your argument, and are now more than halfway to the finish line. Congratulations! So, don't stop now. You'd only be joining the crowd. After all, 43 percent of U.S. faculty have not published any journal articles in the past two years and 26 percent spent no time at all writing and doing research (Lindholm et al 2005, 35). The rate in your particular field may be even higher. Why not keep going by turning to this week's tasks of revising the opening and conclusion of your article?



ON THE IMPORTANCE OF OPENINGS

First impressions are vital. We live amidst a barrage of media in which loud, bright, sexy, violent images work constantly to capture our consumer attention. Sophisticated delivery systems, which depend on consumers' ever more refined ability to read content in fractions of a second, remain the context of our writing. The expectation created by advertisements, talk shows, web pages, text messages, and so on, is that meaning can be communicated with tremendous brevity. Although the journal article is not competing with billboards or sitcoms for attention, it is shaped by such expectations and the dense commercial context of the United States. However quiet and unassuming, the twentieth-first century journal article is under pressure to prove its value quickly. And not just once, but twice.

For an article to get published, it must first do well in the peer-review process. U.S. peer reviewers can find an article frustrating if it fails to give certain information up front or meanders for several pages before getting to the point. In contrast, if your project, argument, approach, sources, contribution, and relevance are clearly stated in the first two or three pages, your article will tend to do better in peer review. Sometimes students tell me that such efficiency is less expected in their discipline, usually in the humanities. But when I ask them to give me an article they consider to be a model of good writing in the field, it almost always has a clear, pointed introduction. Starting strong will aid your article in making it through peer review regardless of field.

Second, any article you publish is competing for scholars' attention with the multitude of other academic articles published in each field every year. With at least 200,000 academic articles and 12,000 academic books published every year in the United States alone (Bowker 2004), skimming has become a way of life. Scholars read past the first page only if the value of the article has made itself apparent. Only two moves establish an article's value quickly: the reputation of the author(s) or the opening. Since none of us are famous (yet!) we must focus on the latter. Articles with strong titles, solid abstracts, and compelling introductions are more likely to be accepted for publication, more likely to be read, and more likely to be cited.

REVISING YOUR OPENING AND CONCLUSION

Most of us need no convincing that starting strong is smart. How do you quickly and clearly establish the value of your article? In the following pages, I give the main ingredients for starting and ending strong. You can certainly cook without some of them, but you will have a poor concoction with none of them.

Day 1: Revising Your Title

Your title is the highway billboard of your article, the only part of your article most readers will ever see and even that, only briefly, as they whip by to other destinations. It is an announcement meant to draw readers to your work. As such, your title must be a direct, clear invitation to a particular conversation. Like an advertisement, your title will have a life of its own independent from your article: it will appear by itself on your curriculum vitae, in tables of contents, and on electronic databases. It is often the only part of your article provided to potential peer reviewers, who on its power will make a decision about whether to review your article. So be sure that your title clearly describes your article. The best title clearly communicates your article's topic. It aids scholars using electronic search engines to find your work easily by employing common keywords. It suggests your argument and any policy implications. It avoids distracting creative or allusive openings. Revisit your current title and use the following advice to consider if it could be improved.

My current title is:	
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Avoid broad titles that would serve better for entire books or series. It is always tempting to suggest the importance of your article by giving it a grand title. But you only annoy your reader if it doesn't match the content. It is no fun to traipse to the library to locate "Twentieth-Century American Cultural Dynamics" only to find that the article should have been titled "Inventing Northern California Counterculture in the 1960s." Be honest in your title. Think about how often you have looked up an article only to find that it was much narrower than the title suggested. Further, many table of contents services use only the first part of article titles in their e-mailed announcements, another reason to ensure the first part communicates. Below are examples of titles that were revised to match the article's more specific content (underline highlights the change made).

Humanities Titles:

- **Original:** Reinterpreting the Cidian Cycle
Revision: Gendering the Spanish Cidian Cycle: Nineteenth-Century British Writer Felicia Hemans's *The Siege of Valencia*¹
- **Original:** Constructing West Hollywood
Revision: Performing an Un-Queer City: West Hollywood's Image Creation Campaign, 1984–2000²
- **Original:** The Mystery of the Missing Letters
Revision: Forging the Armenian Past: Questionable Translations of Abstract Expressionist Arshile Gorky's Missing Letters³



Social Science Titles:

- **Original:** Mitigating Apprehension About Section 8
Revision: Mitigating Apprehension about Section 8 Vouchers: The Positive Role of Housing Specialists in Search and Placement⁴
- **Original:** Tradition and the Spread of AIDS in Malawi
Revision: Risky Traditional Practices Associated with the Spread of HIV/AIDS Among Pregnant Women in the Blantyre and Lilongwe Districts of Malawi⁵

<p>Is my title too broad? If so, what would a more specific title be?</p>	
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Avoid strings of vague terms. First drafts of titles often start with three or four words strung together to give a sense for the broad import of the article. But 10,000 words is rarely going to measure up to those concepts, so it's better to leave them out. They frequently mean more to you than the average reader will understand on a quick read anyway.

Humanities Titles:

- **Original:** Consciousness, Controversy, and Comedy: How Dave Chappelle Made Us Think
Revision: Squeezing Racial Stereotypes on Showtime Television: Dave Chappelle's Conscious Comedy⁶

Social Science Titles:

- **Original:** Revolution, Change, and Transition: Television in the Twenty-First Century
Revision: Primetime Television Challenges to the Movie Industry: The Rise of Reality Programming in the 2000s

<p>Do I use too many vague terms in my title? How can I make it more specific?</p>	
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Name your subjects. It is odd how many times quite specific articles do not name their topics in the title. If your article is about a particular author or text, name that author or text in the title. If it is about a particular city, region, or country, name that geography. If it is about a particular population—women, Latinos, students—name the group. It may seem obvious to you, but nothing is obvious to a search engine. Below are some student revisions to titles.

Humanities Titles:

- **Original:** Grotesque Readings: The Language of Violence in Cervantes
Revision: Grotesque Readings: The Language of Violence in Cervantes' *Don Quixote*⁷
- **Original:** The Electoral Ethnic Bandwagon in New Democracies
Revision: Getting on the Ethnic Bandwagon in New Democracies: Electoral Relationships between Political Elites and Voters of Their Ethnicity⁸

Social Science Titles:

- **Original:** Socially Organized Initiations, Responses, and Evaluations in an Elementary School Classroom
Revision: Socially Organized Questions and Answers: Student-Teacher Interaction in an Elementary School Science Classroom⁹
- **Original:** Effect of Social Support on Pain and Depression
Revision: Effect of Social Support on Pain and Depression among Rheumatoid Arthritis Patients¹⁰

Have I named my subjects in the title? If not, what should I add?	
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Suggest your argument if possible. Rarely can you give a sense for your argument in the title, but if you can, you should. Below are examples of student revisions to good titles to make them even stronger by suggesting the article's argument.

Humanities Titles:

- **Original:** Grave Matters: The Representation of Women in Funerary Offerings in Pre-Columbian West Mexico
Revision: Grave Matters: Reexamining the Representation of Women in Funerary Offerings in Pre-Columbian West Mexico¹¹
- **Original:** Sources for the Fourteenth-Century Ethiopian *Kebra Negast* in Biblical and Koranic Texts
Revision: Rewriting Biblical and Koranic Texts in the Fourteenth-Century Ethiopian *Kebra Negast*

Social Science Titles:

- **Original:** Exposure to Immigrant Culture and Dropping out of School among Asian and Latino Youths¹²
Revision: The Benefits of Biculturalism: Exposure to Immigrant Culture and School Drop-Outs among Asian and Latino Youths



- **Original:** The Theory of and Evidence for the Role of Apology in the Criminal Justice Setting
Revision: Evidence for the Effectiveness of Apology in the Criminal Justice Setting¹³

<p>Have I suggested my argument in the title? If not, could I?</p>	
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Embed your title with searchable keywords. Given that many articles are only read or cited because they have been found through an electronic search, make sure to include common keywords in your title. This may mean being slightly repetitive.

For instance, consider the strong title “Gender-Based Violence, Relationship Power, and Risk of HIV Infection in Women Attending Antenatal Clinics in South Africa.”¹⁴ This title provides a tremendous amount of information in a short space. The authors name the country (South Africa), the problem (violence and HIV), and the location of the research (antenatal clinics). The word antenatal is communicating twice, because it suggests that the focus of the article is on violence against child-bearing women. Note that the authors also manage to fit in the similar keywords “gender” and “women” so that their article will be found by researchers using either word.

In the example below, the student expanded the title to include important keywords that better signaled the gender and race component of her research, enabling like-minded researchers to find her work. For instance, it is easier to find an article with “African-American” in the title than to find an article with “Black” in the title. Black appears in many titles that have nothing to do with race.

- **Original:** Black Faculty Salary Differentials
Revision: The Black Professoriate: Explaining the Salary Gap for African-American Female Faculty¹⁵

In the example below, the student added the term “genetic genealogy,” which is a more searchable term than DNA, and a signal of the argument.

- **Original:** DNA and the Future of Diaspora Studies
Revision: Genetic Genealogy and the Future of Diaspora Studies: A Caution¹⁶

In the example below, the student decided to translate her novel’s title into English, since the article will appear in English.

- **Original:** From the Theater of Identity to the Arcane Production of Nationality: Goethe’s *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre*

Revision: From the Theater of Identity to the Arcane Production of Nationality: Reconsidering Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* as a Bildungsroman¹⁷

Have I given all the important keywords in the title? If not, what should I add?	
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Avoid overly dense titles. Since my advice usually results in quite long titles, make sure you have not gone too far in that direction. Sometimes a title gets too bloated to read. Avoid creating titles that are nothing more than strings of nouns. Below are examples of revisions to titles to make them less dense and more readable.

- **Original:** Degas's Modistes, Chic Consumers, and Fashionable Commodities
Revision: Fashionable Consumption: Women as Consumers and Clerks in the French Impressionist Painting of Degas¹⁸
- **Original:** John Powell, Somatic Acoustics, Racial Difference, and Symphonic Music
Revision: The Somatic Acoustics of Racial Difference in the Symphonic Music of John Powell¹⁹
- **Original:** *The George Lopez Show: An American Family Sitcom Redefining Latinidad on Prime Time Through the Logic of Consumer Capitalism and Individualism*
Revision: Redefining Latinidad on Prime Time Network Television: Consumer Capitalism and the American Family Sitcom *The George Lopez Show*²⁰

Is my title too dense? If so, what should I add or cut?	
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Include a verb if possible. Long titles that include only nouns and adjectives are difficult to absorb. See how much easier it is to read the revised title below?

- **Draft:** Processes of Landscape Change: A Comparative Historical Study of Driving Forces and Neighbourhoods in Stølsheimen and Sjødalen, Norway



Revision: Why Do Landscapes Change? A Comparative Historical Study of Driving Forces and Neighbourhoods in Stølsheimen and Sjødalen, Norway²¹

<p>Do I have a verb in my title? If not, can I insert one?</p>	
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Avoid using your title to prove how witty or well-read you are. This rule is a matter of some debate and does depend a bit on your field. I am still going to argue that you should eschew cute titles. You have the whole article to prove your smarts. Using quotes, puns, double entendres, or allusions in titles is a time-honored tradition in the humanities, and most editors won't stop you, but such titles rarely serve you well in our electronic age. If your title is an obscure, exclusionary in-joke not entirely related to your topic and which can only be understood after reading the whole article word-for-word, reconsider. If, when questioned about the title, you find yourself saying "get it?!" reconsider.

Your title is not the place to compete with your literary subjects in creativity. If you must play with language, do so in your introduction where it is less distracting and there is adequate space to develop an idea. If you doubt the wisdom of what I'm saying, just go online and do a search in an academic article database for titles riffing on Blake's quote "burning bright" or Melville's quote "call me Ishmael" to see how quickly literary gymnastics start to seem hollow.

Below is an example of a title so generic, it is impossible to find electronically. But the author was attached to the musical pun in the title and wouldn't relinquish it. The revised title would have been a wiser choice.

- **Published:** Research Note²²
Revision: A Song for My Father: Honoring the Family Roots of Research

Below is an example of a published article with a title that is a play on the popular 1990s expression "shit happens." While some might find this cute, the title "Shift Happens" does not adequately reflect the content of the article. I think the title should have been revised.

- **Published:** Shift Happens: Spanish and English Transmission Between Parents and Their Children²³
Revision: Latino Linguistic Diversity: Evidence for Bilingualism and Spanish to English Language Shift among Chicano Children

Below is an example of one student's revision of a social science title to delete an unclear quote. Although the original is not bad—the quote does indicate something about the content—the revision is clearer and gives a better sense for the importance of the article.

- **Original:** "It's Not Abuse When...": Situational Definitions of Child Abuse by Marginalized Parents
Revision: When Prevention Fails: The Role of Context in Persistent Child Abuse²⁴

If you remain unconvinced, and still really want to use a quote in your title, let's look at an example of one that works. In the following title, the quote is a full sentence, not an unreadable fragment, and it directly relates to the rest of the title. After reading the title twice, we can see that the author means to suggest that certain forms of masculinity are an American myth. On reading the title three times, we are not so sure; perhaps she means that something masculinist like Manifest Destiny is the most blatant of American myths. While creating this doubt is clever, is it helpful to the reader?

- **Published:** "The Most Blatant of All Our American Myths": Masculinity, Male Bonding, and the Wilderness in Sinclair Lewis's *Mantrap*.²⁵

Finalizing the Title

Now try to put this together and create a stronger title. A great exercise for arriving at a better title is gathering a group of scholarly friends together with a blackboard to brainstorm. You can often see quite spectacular improvements under these conditions.

My new and improved title is:	
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title exercise

Days 2 and 3: Revising Your Introduction

If you have provided a strong title and a solid abstract, you may feel like there is little else you can do in your introduction. Never fear, much can be done in your introduction that can't be done elsewhere and must be done early. The main purpose of the introduction is to provide enough information for the reader to be able to understand your argument and its stakes.

Introductions have some standard features in common. Alex Henry and Robert L. Roseberry (1997) analyzed the introductions and conclusions of articles and found that most shared three "moves." All article introductions stated the central idea (what I am calling the argument in this workbook). Many also introduced the general topic and then narrowed the focus to the specific topic. Statements of the topic often included an example, a general history, a prediction, or a quote. Narrowing the focus often included statistics, dates, examples, background information, or rationales for the argument. Statements of the central idea often included stating a fact, a problem, or a solution. You might want to evaluate whether your article makes these moves.

✓

3 moves



You can also make your introduction stronger by starting with a telling anecdote, striking depiction of your subject, aggressive summary of the literature, or solid claim about the significance of your topic. Below are some strong openings of published articles, demonstrating the variations possible.

Anecdotal opening. When I was growing up in New York City, my parents used to take me to an event in Inwood Park at which Indians—real American Indians dressed in feathers and blankets—could be seen and touched by children like me. This event was always a disappointment.²⁶ (For an article analyzing U.S. textbooks' presentation of American Indians' role in U.S. history.)

Subject opening. Samuel Johnson was a person with multiple disabilities. He was blind in one eye and had poor vision in the other. He was also deaf in one ear.²⁷ (For an article discussing the absence of a discourse of disability in eighteenth-century England.)

Critical opening. Historians have been much more concerned with explaining questions surrounding how Africans produced, transported, and sold captives than with exploring African strategies against the slave trade.²⁸ (For an article on Guinea Bissauans' strategies of resisting the slave trade.)

Significance opening. Few children's movies can rival the success of *The Lion King* or the controversy that has surrounded it since it was first shown commercially in 1994.²⁹ (For an article on Latina/o immigration to the United States as the anxious subtext of a Disney film.)

Historical opening. In the 1970s and 1980s, amid concerns over the negative effects of concentrated urban poverty and suburban resistance to the encroachment of public housing, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) slowed the construction of new large-scale public housing projects and increased the use of Section 8 certificates and vouchers to subsidize low-income households in the private rental market.³⁰ (For an article on tactics that community workers used to help low-income families gain housing when landlords were suspicious of Section 8 vouchers.)

Argumentative opening. Civic education is important.³¹ (For an article arguing that civic education is essential to a functioning democracy.)

What type of opening do I have? How could it be improved?	
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Start with a gripping first sentence. There is nothing like a vivid first sentence to get your introduction off to a good start, especially in the humanities (the opening examples above are also first sentences). Unfortunately, many published journal articles do not start off strong. One typical humanities opening is analyzing a quote by someone else, which I have yet to see be really compelling. Others start with a series of unanswered questions, which I find frustrating. I have enough unanswered questions of my own! Of course, this is my taste, so when you read articles, identify what you find compelling in others' writing so you can craft compelling first sentences yourself.

<p>Could my first sentence be more gripping? If so, how could I accomplish that?</p>	
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Give basic information about your subject. It is surprising how often introductions do not properly introduce the subject. "Often inexperienced or young writers don't have a sense of how much the reader needs to know: the writers has a complete image in mind . . . and they are surprised that their writing didn't convey the whole thing to the reader" (Willis 1993, 64). If you have not given the who, what, why, where, and how of the topic, you have not introduced it. Keep in mind two truths. When you are writing for publication, you are usually writing for people who know less than you do on the topic. And prose lasts. What appears perfectly clear right now—such as "9/11"—may be less so twenty years from now. So if you are discussing an event, give the dates; a place, give its geopolitical context; a new term, define it; a noncanonical text, give the author, date of publication, a summary, and its claim to importance.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that such basic information must be given in full sentences or long paragraphs. Such information can often be given quite quickly, in clauses. Indeed, when introducing case studies for which you have hundreds of pages of detail, you need to avoid giving too much information. Below are some examples of basic information in published articles.

Person. Zora Neale Hurston, a black novelist and anthropologist, . . . [wrote] a book-length collection of folktales, songs, and hoodoo practices entitled *Mules and Men*.³²

Text. Among Europe's experimental films from the 1920s and 30s, perhaps none offers a more fascinating conjunction of psychoanalysis and representations of race than *Borderline*, the expressionist, interracial melodrama produced by the POOL group and directed by Kenneth Macpherson.³³

Place. With a focus on the Guinea-Bissau region of the Upper Guinea coast, an area that sat on the slaving frontiers of the powerful



interior state of Kaabu and the smaller coastal state of Casamance, this chapter will begin to answer these questions.³⁴

Movement. The New Journalism—that genre-blurred mélange of ethnography, investigative reportage, and fiction—is widely and rightly considered to be *the* characteristic genre of the sixties.³⁵

Theory. I focus here on Herman Witkin . . . the first researcher to extend the study of psychological sex differences into the area of human perception.³⁶

Term. In this article, prosody refers collectively to variations in pitch, tempo, and rhythm.³⁷

<p>Do I give basic information about my subject? What else is needed?</p>	
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State your argument and, if possible, your findings. See Week 2 of this workbook for information on crafting an argument and stating it concisely. Remember that an argument is a statement to which you can coherently respond “I agree” or “I disagree.” It should relate to research done by others. Note how the published examples below weave the argument together with claims for significance, basic information, and findings.

Humanities Openings:

- The focus of this essay is the device of the bloody handkerchief popularized by Thomas Kyd’s spectacularly successful *The Spanish Tragedy* (1582–92). . . . By analyzing Kyd’s subversion of a long tradition linking holy cloths and sacred blood in medieval drama, I wish to demonstrate that the bloody napkin is a ghostly palimpsest that absorbs meaning through intertextual borrowing as well as through fresh symbolic resonance. Further, I wish to argue that Kyd’s appropriation of the handkerchief was not didactic, as has been argued by recent scholars of Reformation drama, but an opportunistic bid to recast the late medieval “contract of transformation” embodied by bloody cloth as an addictive “contract of sensation.”³⁸
- My purpose in this essay is to describe and define the ways in which Afro-American women intellectuals, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, theorized about the possibilities and limits of patriarchal power through its manipulation of racialized and gendered social categories and practices. . . . I hope that a discussion of Cooper, Wells, and Hopkins in the context of the black women’s movement will direct readers to consider more seriously

how black feminists conceptualized the possibilities for resisting sexual oppression.³⁹

- Ecofeminists . . . contend that ecological destruction is, at its base, misogynist, and the inevitable result of the masculine drive to control and dominate the female. . . . This [article] challenges as biased and banal some of the ecofeminist assertions. . . . The discussion suggests alternative strategies for transcending some of the divisive ideological “isms and schisms” that present the major obstacle to realizing a more humane society for both women and men.⁴⁰

Social Science Quantitative:

- Young people with high academic ability who excel during their elementary and secondary school years are not necessarily guaranteed similar success in their university experiences, [especially] students who represent the first [from their families] to pursue higher education.⁴¹
- [Some have] argued that the social construction of science as “masculine” discourages girls from participating in science by posing the risk of undermining their gender identity: girl scientists may be seen—and may thus be under pressure to see themselves—as more masculine and less feminine than their peers. However, the gendered image of science and scientists may be more flexible than appears from the above.⁴²

<p>Do I state my argument and findings? If not, what should I add and where?</p>	
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Identify your position vis-à-vis the previous research. As discussed in Week 5, your research must be demonstrably related to what has been written before. An important part of an introduction is announcing your entry point; that is, how your argument relates to previous arguments about your topic. So make sure you do this in your introduction.

<p>What's my entry point? Do I state it clearly? Do I show how my research relates?</p>	
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Articulate the significance of your subject. Make sure that your reader knows the importance of the person, text, group, question, or problem you have taken as your subject. Do not assume that they know why it is important or how important. Even if the reader does know why, part of pulling readers into an article is your stating the case in a particularly clear or powerful way. This is part of how you demonstrate your authority to speak on the topic and what the reader will gain from reading your article.

What makes a subject significant? In the United States, being at an extreme—the first or the last, the best or the worst, the largest or the smallest—is a time-honored mark of significance. A traditional claim for significance is stating how the article contributes in important ways to our knowledge. In the opening sentences of the published articles excerpted below, the authors effectively claim the significance of their topics by establishing the tremendous impact of their subjects or the events associated with them. In this way, they also quickly contextualize their subjects, painting the larger picture that makes their question and argument important.

- The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, on New York City (NYC) were the largest human-made intentional disaster in U.S. history. The sheer scope of the attacks, the level of property destruction, the financial repercussions, and the continuing level of anxiety suggested that these attacks might have mental health consequences both for direct victims of the attacks and for the population at large.⁴³ (For an article on children's poor access to mental health services after 9/11.)
- In 1997 and 1998, Asia was hit with a severe economic crisis. Most countries in the region were faced with massive currency fluctuations, banking crises, and plummeting stock markets. Economic problems were compounded by political turmoil. Given past experiences in Asia of massive financial difficulties coupled with political upheaval—specifically in Thailand, South Korea, Indonesia, and Malaysia—I begin with a broad question: What is the relationship between economic crises and political change, specifically democratization?⁴⁴
- Dolly Parton has achieved broad popularity over the past twenty years as an exceptional country musician who successfully “crossed over” into pop music and is now perceived as one of the industry's most respected and prolific singer/songwriters. . . . As a fluent and savvy promoter of “Dolly,” Parton provides a fascinating case study in the construction of a star image, specifically one that mediates the often contradictory ideals of gender, region, and class.⁴⁵

Another traditional claim for significance is stating that the popular understandings of a subject are erroneous.

- Enshrined in the Bill of Rights in 1789, the grand jury has been praised as the greatest instrument of freedom known to democratic

government and a bulwark against oppression. At the same time, the grand jury remains one of the most controversial and least understood aspects of the criminal justice system, and has been abolished in many states and in England.⁴⁶ (For an article about Latino participation on U.S. grand juries.)

- From the earliest accounts in New Spain to Hollywood's Golden Age, few items are as central to their tradition-bound popular image as Native Americans' bows and arrows. Yet archeologists believe that the earliest Americans did not use them.⁴⁷ (For an article about stone bifaces in American antiquity.)

What is the significance of my topic? Do I articulate it?	
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Provide a road map of your article. Summarizing the structure of your article in your introduction makes it easier for the reader to follow your progress. Below are some sample summaries from published articles.

- Motivated by the need for a thorough investigation on convenience yield dynamics and its determinants, and in the light of the recent theoretical and empirical contributions in the literature, I analyze the daily convenience yield behavior for six commodity markets: crude oil, heating oil, gasoline, wheat, corn, and copper. I first evaluate whether option pricing can be used in statistically explaining daily convenience yield variations. Next, I question the appropriateness of the standard call option as the choice for option valuation framework and contrast it with another option, that is, the exchange option. Finally, I empirically test the two hypotheses on convenience yield behavior by Heinkel, Howe, and Hughes (1990).⁴⁸
- In exploring the issue of how group size relates to exclusivist or inclusionist identification strategies, I begin with an overview of my basic theory of group size. I then consider the rhetorical strategies deployed in the recruitment of allies in a perspective which is inspired by action theory. Next, I turn to the conceptual tool kit of discourses on exclusion and inclusion. I then return to economic reasoning, often taken as the underlying cause of identity politics, and of politics in general.⁴⁹

Do I summarize my article? Should I?	
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Avoid the following clichés.

Don't start with a dictionary definition. Indeed, do not devote whole paragraphs anywhere in your article to various dictionary definitions of your main terms, unless your article is etymologically driven. Dictionaries are not sacred objects to be consulted as oracles.

Don't start with Wikipedia. Indeed, citing Wikipedia or any other encyclopedia in your article is often considered a sign of poor scholarship, unless you are citing them as primary sources you intend to analyze critically.

Don't start with vast claims. Claiming that something has been true "for all time" or "for all of human history" or "in all cultures" or "for all peoples" or "around the globe" will mark your article as unsophisticated. Almost nothing has always or everywhere been true.

Example of an Efficient Introduction

As an example, I have reproduced below the entire introduction to one article, accomplished in just over 200 words. Not every introduction has to be this efficient, and the first sentence of this one could be more gripping, but I want to show how little space it can take to give basic information, make a claim for significance, identify your position vis-à-vis the previous research, summarize the structure, and even list findings.

- Scholars in the fields of both sociology and political science have neglected the political importance of local feminist activists who organize in pursuit of electing women to public office. Such activists have remained mostly invisible to scholars due in large part to a disciplinary division of labor that treats social movement activity and electoral politics as two separate fields (. . .). I argue that the confines of these disciplinary traditions have also affected feminist research on women and politics, resulting in little if any research on community organizing as related to women's bids for elective office. To address this gap in the literature, I begin by reviewing the work of prominent researchers in the fields of electoral participation, community activism, and feminist work on women in politics. I then investigate the work and lives of members of a local chapter of the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), suggesting how the efforts of local feminist activists might add to our understanding of political and social change. In particular, a focus on local NWPC activists (1) refines our understanding of "being political," (2) suggests the importance of a local activist infrastructure for electoral change, and (3) makes visible the significance of local activism within a candidate-centered context.⁵⁰

Day 4: Revisiting Your Abstract, Related Literature Review, and Author Order

You may be expected to provide an abstract when you submit your article. If your title is the highway billboard ad, your abstract is the full-page

Abstract

magazine ad. Many readers will decide whether to read your article based on your abstract. In fact, more than one person may cite your article on the basis of reading your abstract alone. A good abstract is an extremely important part of getting into publication and disseminating your research, so if you have not had a chance to finalize it yet, do so now. Follow the advice in Week 2, keeping in mind the changes you have made to the argument, related literature review, evidence, and structure. You can also revisit it in later weeks when you are closer to sending your article to a journal.

A good related literature review is an important part of a good journal article introduction. This was covered in Week 5, so feel free to turn back to that week if you feel it could still use some work.

A final issue to determine regarding your opening is relevant only to those writing articles with coauthors; in which case you must make final decisions about whose name goes first on the article and whose second, and so on. This is a vital issue that cannot be addressed properly here. Most associations now have detailed guidelines on authorship order, and some journals require authors to answer a series of questions about who conceived the hypothesis, who designed the experiment, who managed the laboratory, who collected the data, who analyzed the data, who drafted the article, and who revised the article so that editors can accurately determine authorship. Nevertheless, conflict over authorship of articles is common. I will only say here, make a written agreement with the other authors before you even start drafting. Hammer out what constitutes the duties of a first author, second author, and so on. If you haven't done that in advance, or no longer believe the agreement is fair, you have your work cut out for you now. Just remember that in the social sciences, many graduate students never get their names first on articles, and many scholars in their field wouldn't expect it. Even if a student wrote every draft of an article, it will be perceived as quite fair in many fields for the student not to appear as first author if he or she did not collect the data or arrive at the hypothesis. If it is any comfort, the more authors on an article, the higher its chances of acceptance and of being cited subsequently (Weller 2001, 128–129).

Do I have any coauthor issues? If so, how should I proceed?	
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Day 5: Revising Your Conclusion

A good conclusion is one that summarizes your argument and its significance in a powerful way. The conclusion should restate the article's relevance to the scholarly literature and debate. Although the conclusion does not introduce new arguments, it does point beyond the article to the larger context or the more general case. It does not merely repeat the introduction,



but takes a step back, out to the bigger picture and states why the argument matters in the larger scheme of things.

One survey found that all argumentative articles included conclusions (Hyland 1990). Another found that two moves were generally present: the authors made a claim about the strength of the argument and its supporting evidence and then linked that argument to the wider context (Henry & Roseberry 1997, 485). That is, they stated how the internal outcome of the article (the success of the argument) can lead to an external outcome (a change in the world or the way that we think about the world). Thus, conclusions were usually marked by an expansion from the argument through evaluation and implications. They also found that article conclusions tended to evaluate or reaffirm the argument, but also could include predictions, admonishments, consequences, solutions, or personal reactions.

Social science conclusions also sometimes include remarks about possible directions for future research and reservations about the argument. Humanities conclusions are often more eloquent than the rest of the article, with an elevation in language and lyricism. As the scholars Stevens and Stewart observed, humanities scholars tend to begin their articles by declaring the significance of their argument and conclude them by declaring the significance of their texts (e.g., the poem, score, or painting they analyzed) (Stevens and Stewart 1987, 110).

By the time you reach the conclusion, you may feel that you have no language left. If you are finding the conclusion difficult to write, ask your colleagues to read your article and tell you what they understand the article to be about and why it is important. They can often give you new language and slightly different ways of saying the same thing.

<p>What are some useful sentences or words from my reviewer's summary of my article?</p>	
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DOCUMENTING YOUR WRITING TIME AND TASKS

On the following weekly plan, please graph when you expect to write and what tasks you hope to accomplish this week. Then keep track of what you actually did. Remember, you are to allot fifteen minutes to one hour every day to writing. At the end of the week, take pride in your accomplishments and evaluate whether any patterns need changing.