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us what's being done." So instead of saying the characters were "having dinner," be more descriptive by saying, "Bree sat across the table glaring at her new-found foe: chocolate cake."

Another vital process you want to pay attention to is **analyzing the paper**. Believe it or not, instructors actually care about what you think. I know it can be intimidating to use outside sources in a paper, but instructors care more about how a quote or source help you prove your point more than just summarizing the text. Don't be afraid to go into details about your opinion of the quote. Whether you agree or disagree, your instructor wants to know why. Remember not to use the 1st or 2nd person reference in more advanced English classes.

Some of the key factors that will make your paper stand out are **language and diction**. The words you use don't have to be six syllables long, but instructors do expect you to use college-level grammar and vocabulary. I'm not saying you need to crack open a medical book for an English paper. Just have

a thesaurus ready so you can avoid repetition. However, I strongly advise you to use words you already know or are somewhat familiar with. The thesaurus can stray from the actual meaning of the word you're trying to use. Another problem you'll want to avoid is tense shift. This is a problem that happens when your verbs shift from the past to the present—make sure they remain consistent.

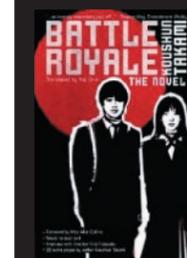
The last issue you want to deal with is **punctuation**. Avoid run-on sentences at all costs. Instructors prefer reading those details in succinct sentences rather than a list of details in one l-o-n-g sentence. The final, and most crucial element for your paper is **format**. MLA format isn't that hard to remember, and some instructors refuse papers if the formatting is incorrect.

That's it. Really. When you look at it this way, it seems a lot less scary, doesn't it? We just write about ourselves or express our opinions. (...and you thought writing English papers meant using strings of complex words and phrases!)



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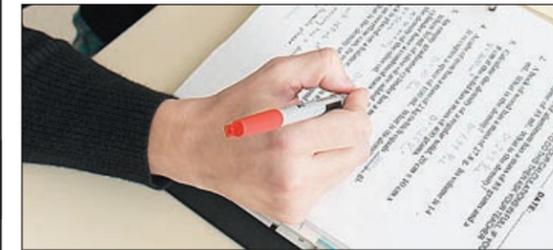
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The PAPER Jam



September 2010

What Do Instructors **REALLY** Look for in Our Essays?



By **Melanie Hirahara**

Hey, you! Yeah, you! Want the inside scoop on what English instructors consider the most important components of our papers? Well, look no further. From English 252 all the way up to English 3, the rubrics for our papers look at the same basic skill sets. Instructors tell us, "Don't worry, this first essay doesn't have to be perfect. I just want to gauge where you are as a writer." But what does that really mean? If we fail the first one, will the other papers we write have no chance at getting an A? What if I can't pass this class because of this particular @%# \$#! paper?

Stop. Take a deep breath and relax. I'll let you in on all the secrets of writing better papers.

The most important hurdle you want to tackle first is **organization and support**. You need an introduction to tell the reader what your essay is going to contain. You also need an **arguable thesis**—this is your paper, pick a side and stick to it. Make sure your topic sentences support your thesis. You don't want to tell us a story about baking cookies with your grandma when you're discussing abortion or gay marriage. Lastly, instructors want you to **show** and not **tell**. One instructor said, "It's like the voice-over for *Desperate Housewives* **tells** us what's happening and the actors **show**

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This Article Is Like A Banana...

By **Laramie Woolsey**

Analogies are everywhere. They are in our day-to-day conversations, the movies we watch, the songs we listen to, and, of course, in the things we read and write. You've heard teachers, parents, and even friends spout analogies. But, why are they so often used? Why are they so important in literature, media, and life?

An analogy is a comparison of an unfamiliar object or idea to a familiar one in an attempt to explain or illuminate the unfamiliar. Some examples are the oh-so famous lines of Forrest Gump, comparing life to a box of chocolates.

In this instance, the matter is very straightforward and easy to interpret. People use analogies like these all the time. I've often been told "You're blind as a bat," and I have often felt "Like a fish out of water." People also like to make up their own analogies, which is often amusing or sometimes even eye-opening. Not long ago my voice teacher told our class, in his best Forrest Gump imitation, "Life is like a box of *Solfeggio*—you never know what syllable you're going



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to sing." While this example is more amusing than eye-opening, you can see that anyone can create an analogy, even Reedley College Instructor Kameran. While these are easy and fun ways to use analogies, they are particularly useful for explaining more convoluted or complex matters, like the ones in a psychology class. While the processes of memory can be very difficult to understand and remember (which is kind of ironic, if you think about it), it can be more easily understood with the help of analogy:

Your short-term memory is like the RAM on a computer: it records the information in front of you right now. Some of what you experience seems to evaporate—like words that go missing when you turn off your computer without hitting SAVE. But other short-term memories go through a molecular process called consolidation: they're downloaded onto the hard drive. These long-term memories, filled with past

loves and losses and fears, stay dormant until you call them up. ("To Pluck a Rooted Sorrow," *Newsweek*, April 27, 2009)

An analogy can be extended into a long, multiple-point comparison, such as in the preceding quote. The length and detail that these analogies contain enhance the meaning, and by making so many connections, make the information much easier to remember and comprehend.

The importance of analogy for teaching and writing cannot be overemphasized. Analogies are an excellent way to give meaning and impact to your words or length to your page. Analogies are a way to understand an important meaning, word, or concept that may have been unfamiliar or strange. They provide a way to advance learning, not only in class, but in life. While I hope no one ever tells you "You're as stubborn as a mule," I do hope that you will recognize the importance of analogy and make an effort to include it in your work and your life.

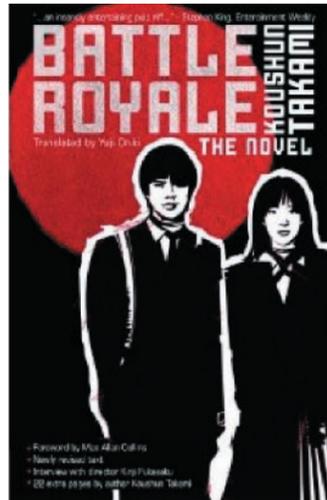
Book Review

*Battle Royale Paperback • 624 pages Publisher
UIZ Media LLC; 2009*

By Andee Lewis

Koushun Takami's *Battle Royale* takes place in an alternate-timeline version of Japan that runs under a very strict code of fascist guidelines and values. In order to inspire paranoia and discourage rebellion, the Japanese government invented an annual program requiring fifty high school classes to be isolated and forced to kill each other until only one student remained. Each student was to be fitted with a metal collar that would explode if they tried to remove it or escape.

The novel focuses on one particular junior class from a high school in the fictional town of Shiroywa. Although it tells the story of each individual student, the main character Takami focuses on is Shuya Nanahara, an orphan who was seen as a rebel because he loved American rock music. The book begins with all the students on a bus, believing they are going on a field trip. Partway into the trip, the bus was filled with sleeping gas, knocking all of the students out. Hours later, they woke up inside an old school building on an aban-



doned island where they were informed that their only way off the island is for each to kill as many of their classmates as possible and be the last one standing.

I enjoyed this book particularly because it is truly scary. Takami leaves out no gruesome detail in describing the students' thought processes and

actions, making the book morbidly fascinating and hard to put down. He also carefully crafts the personalities and histories of each and every one of the forty-two students, adding an element of humanity that forces you to consider what your own actions might be under the same circumstances.

Overall, *Battle Royale* is a great thriller/horror novel that is an easy, but thought-provoking read-- but it's definitely not for the faint of heart.

“ QUOTES BY A FEW OF THE AUTHORS WE LOVE
Selected by Philip Cook

Writing has laws of perspective, of light and shade just as painting does, or music. If you are born knowing them, fine. If not, learn them. Then rearrange the rules to suit yourself.
-Truman Capote

Don't say the old lady screamed. Bring her on and let her scream.
- Mark Twain

Fiction is obliged to stick to possibilities. Truth isn't.
- Mark Twain ”

Limericks, What Are They?

By Rachel Klippenstein

Limericks are a type of poetry that often bring a smile. For most people, the idea of 'poetry' conjures famous and widely circulated sonnets, thanks to mass media and present high school curriculum, and Shakespeare's lines from *Romeo and Juliet*. Limericks, on the other hand, are quite the opposite. Unlike sonnets, they are thought to have originated in Ireland and are usually quite funny.

The standard form for a limerick is a stanza made up of five lines. The lines follow a rhyme scheme of AABBA with the first, second and fifth lines rhyming with one another and the third and fourth rhyming with differently. The third and fourth lines are also shorter in meter and syllable count than the others. The following limericks were written by Edward Lear, the famous "nonsense" poet:

*There was an old man of Dumbree
Who taught little owls to drink tea:
For he said "To eat mice"
Is not proper or nice,"
That amiable man of Dumbree.*

*There was an old person from Putney
Whose food was roast spiders and chutney,
Which he took with his tea,
Within sight of the sea,
That romantic old person from Putney*

Try writing one of your own next time you are trying to rev up for a new paper assignment. Finding vocabulary that rhymes can be a fun way to warm up when you have a big project in front of you.

*Writing papers is something I hate
Typing away, thinking "just great"
It has to be done
So I can have fun
Looks like I'm visiting HUM 58!*

“ QUOTES BY A FEW OF THE AUTHORS WE LOVE
Selected by Philip Cook

Ideas are like rabbits. You get a couple and learn how to handle them, and pretty soon you have a dozen.
- John Steinbeck

In the writing process, the more a story cooks, the better.
- Doris Lessing

When asked, "How do you write?" I invariably answer, "one word at a time."
- Stephen King ”