

a brochure, a web page, a blog); its beginning, middle, and end; the order you choose for your details and evidence; transitional words and phrases; the incorporation of headings and subheadings.

- **Diction: your word choice**—the complexity of your words, whether multisyllable and formal or single syllable and colloquial; your use of special terminology or everyday speech; your choice of emotional or nonemotional words.
- **Syntax: your sentence structure**—your use of long complex sentences or short simple ones; your use of active and passive verbs to change emphasis; your variation of sentence length and complexity.
- **Voice 1: your tone**—the attitude (serious, reverential, humorous, sarcastic, straightforward) you want to convey about your subject matter; your variation of tone for effect.
- **Voice 2: your stance**—the degree of your forcefulness or directness in the way you address an audience; your distance from the audience as a persona.
- **Persona: your personality, your character**—the way you come across as a person, a human being, to your readers.

Reading and Writing Rhetorically: An Example

Let's pull together everything we've unpacked so far about reading and writing as related acts of rhetorical composing by examining a text, tracing a rhetorical reading of it, and then planning a written response to it, a composition that might be published in a section of the same magazine where the original text appeared.

The anthology of this book introduces you to a broad array of themes that have dominated American thought and literature since the seventeenth century. A great many of those issues are still deeply embedded in the fabric of life in the United States today. One of these continuing central questions involves American ingenuity, especially in the area of technology. Americans value inventiveness, and Americans have faith in the power of technology to solve problems. In their time, the cotton gin, the sewing machine, the grain reaper, the assembly line—all invented by Americans—and the train, not invented but certainly exploited by Americans, were seen not only as advances but as problem solvers. Yet, in many cases, problems persist despite technology and our belief in it. In some cases new technologies might worsen rather than alleviate problems. So we confront a question: How much can we or should we rely on technology, especially to solve ongoing issues and problems of justice and equality?

In his essay for the *New Yorker*, Malcolm Gladwell writes of the problems with new technologies, and he links technology to community, another important theme for American literature and culture.

Malcolm Gladwell Small Change

Why the revolution will not be tweeted

At four-thirty in the afternoon on Monday, February 1, 1960, four college students sat down at the lunch counter at the Woolworth's in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina. They were freshmen at North Carolina A&T, a black college a mile or so away.

"I'd like a cup of coffee, please," one of the four, Ezell Blair, said to the waitress.

"We don't serve Negroes here," she replied.

The Woolworth's lunch counter was a long L-shaped bar that could seat sixty-six people, with a standup snack bar at one end. The seats were for whites. The snack bar was for blacks. Another employee, a black woman who worked at the steam table, approached the students and tried to warn them away. "You're acting stupid, ignorant!" she said. They didn't move. Around five-thirty, the front doors to the store were locked. The four still didn't move. Finally, they left by a side door. Outside, a small crowd had gathered, including a photographer from the *Greensboro Record*. "I'll be back tomorrow with A&T College," one of the students said.

Now, let's stop at this opening, which functions as the setup for the argument Gladwell will make, as well as his method of drawing readers into that argument through the story he tells. As Chapter 4 will explain, this "drawing in" is called in rhetorical terms the **exordium**, the web a writer creates to prepare readers for what might come next and to stimulate their interest.

How does the reading of this small opening demonstrate how readers must be inventive with the text they're reading? First, as in writing, readers locate and make context. Gladwell tells us that the story takes place February 1, 1960, but his essay is written in 2010. We must write in our *own* context as we read the story. Maybe we're thinking about civil rights in 2010, perhaps how different the world seems now from that day. Maybe we're predicting that Gladwell is going to use that story somehow to make a point about 2010 issues since it doesn't seem to be simply a history given the essay's title.

As we read even these few lines, then, we are making meaning for ourselves, speculating about the reasons for the story, Gladwell's take on it, how it's going to be used, what it has to do with today, and, maybe most of all, what it has to do with Twitter. These questions, asked by us as readers, are the very ones we ask ourselves (mostly unconsciously) as we write. *Why should I use the quotes? How can I make the connection to my argument clear? Will people think what I'm saying is relevant to today? Will they get the reference to the title?*