

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?*

There's more. You may know the story of the four North Carolina A&T students who walked from their university downtown to sit at the Woolworth's counter and changed history. You may have heard that the civil rights movement began that day, even if you also know that the movement had been active long before 1960. Maybe you live in North Carolina and know about A&T's homecoming weekends. Your background as a reader and your personal situation—where you live, the family stories you hear, how often you read the news—help you as you create, or write, the text you begin to read.

Gladwell continues:

By next morning, the protest had grown to twenty-seven men and four women, most from the same dormitory as the original four. The men were dressed in suits and ties. The students had brought their schoolwork, and studied as they sat at the counter. On Wednesday, students from Greensboro's "Negro" secondary school, Dudley High, joined in, and the number of protesters swelled to eighty. By Thursday, the protesters numbered three hundred, including three white women, from the Greensboro campus of the University of North Carolina. By Saturday, the sit-in had reached six hundred. People spilled out onto the street. White teen-agers waved Confederate flags. Someone threw a firecracker. At noon, the A&T football team arrived. "Here comes the wrecking crew," one of the white students shouted.

By the following Monday, sit-ins had spread to Winston-Salem, twenty-five miles away, and Durham, fifty miles away. The day after that, students at Fayetteville State Teachers College and at Johnson C. Smith College, in Charlotte, joined in, followed on Wednesday by students at St. Augustine's College and Shaw University, in Raleigh. On Thursday and Friday, the protest crossed state lines, surfacing in Hampton and Portsmouth, Virginia, in Rock Hill, South Carolina, and in Chattanooga, Tennessee. By the end of the month, there were sit-ins throughout the South, as far west as Texas. "I asked every student I met what the first day of the sitdowns had been like on his campus," the political theorist Michael Walzer wrote in *Dissent*. "The answer was always the same: 'It was like a fever. Everyone wanted to go.'" Some seventy thousand students eventually took part. Thousands were arrested and untold thousands more radicalized. . . .

Here is the end of the *exordium*.

. . . These events in the early sixties became a civil-rights war that engulfed the South for the rest of the decade—and it happened without e-mail, texting, Facebook, or Twitter.

Now you can tell that Gladwell uses the Greensboro sit-ins as the first of a series that follows, and that the series of events taken together leads to the success of the civil rights movement in this country. You know it was a success because you mentally incorporate those events into what you know about life now. There are no more segregated lunch counters, no legal refusals to serve anyone on the basis of ethnicity or race. Gladwell's discussion of these events and the way he ends, by listing what the events did not depend on, tell the reader something important: Gladwell believes the civil rights movement was important and successful. And he doesn't believe new technology helps movements like this one occur.

Read the rest of this essay to see how Gladwell makes this connection. You may find yourself arguing with him or qualifying his conclusions. Maybe you have other evidence to offer. Or maybe you agree: community depends on factors that technology doesn't increase in significant ways.

As you read consider how you respond. Are you nodding or shaking your head? Are you coming up with rejoinders or more examples that make his point? Do you resist his implication about generational difference or find yourself asserting it? All these questions show how you're reading inventively—indeed, how you're writing—creating, interpreting, assigning value to—what you read.

The world, we are told, is in the midst of a revolution. The new tools of social media have reinvented social activism. With Facebook and Twitter and the like, the traditional relationship between political authority and popular will has been upended, making it easier for the powerless to collaborate, coordinate, and give voice to their concerns. When ten thousand protesters took to the streets in Moldova in the spring of 2009 to protest against their country's Communist government, the action was dubbed the Twitter Revolution, because of the means by which the demonstrators had been brought together. A few months after that, when student protests rocked Tehran, the State Department took the unusual step of asking Twitter to suspend scheduled maintenance of its Web site, because the Administration didn't want such a critical organizing tool out of service at the height of the demonstrations. "Without Twitter the people of Iran would not have felt empowered and confident to stand up for freedom and democracy," Mark Pfeifle, a former national-security adviser, later wrote, calling for Twitter to be nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize. Where activists were once defined by their causes, they are now defined by their tools. Facebook warriors go online to push for change. "You are the best hope for us all," James K. Glassman, a former senior State Department official, told a crowd of cyber activists at a recent conference sponsored by Facebook, AT&T, Howcast, MTV, and Google. Sites like Facebook, Glassman said, "give the U.S. a significant competitive advantage over terrorists. Some time ago, I said that Al Qaeda was 'eating our lunch on the Internet.' That is no longer the case. Al Qaeda is stuck in Web 1.0. The Internet is now about interactivity and conversation."