

## Tips for Writing Scholarly Papers

Audrey Thompson

Q If you are asked to write a scholarly paper, your instructor will be looking for one or more of the following: an exposition, an analysis, and/or an argument. Expository papers need not include a critique, but if you are asked to offer a critique, you may have to provide some degree of exposition before you can move to the argument or analysis.

O An expository paper sets forth the main points and ideas in a position, theory, or analysis. Essentially, exposition involves description and explanation. Usually, you will be asked to summarize ideas or points that are examined at greater length in your readings. You also may be asked to compare and contrast or to synthesize ideas. In some cases, your assignment will be to address a particular idea in some depth. It may be helpful to think of exposition as being like either an encyclopedia entry (bringing together the main points in a coherent summary) or a film documentary (showing important and interesting relations between different perspectives on or aspects of a situation). Because the main point of an expository paper is to explain, it is crucial that your discussion be clear and straightforward but not oversimplified. Your organization should help to clarify any important relationships between the ideas; your actual description should be as specific as the assignment demands. Be sure to support your claims with points taken from the readings — and use specific examples.

Q An analysis involves pulling things apart to see how they work or how they were put together. You might want to think of an analysis as being like a movie review that tells you about the tradition to which the movie belongs, its strengths and weaknesses, its connections to other movies or to books or political events, and how the director achieved particular effects. An analysis can be applied to a case study, an ethnography, an argument, a theory, a policy, or a pedagogy, among other possibilities. Analyses usually require that you apply a certain framework of analysis. Thus, you might be asked to analyze a children's book in light of Rudine Sims's three anti-racist categories, for example, or to discuss a newspaper article using the tools of discourse analysis. An analysis delves below the surface to offer explanations or critiques that might not be available to a casual observer. Those explanations and critiques are enhanced by the use of particular analytic or critical tools.

O Mounting an argument means taking a position and making it persuasive through appeals to evidence and logic (although not necessarily logic in the most conservative sense of the term). An argument assumes one or more counter-arguments or foils: something you are arguing *against*. If there is no possible or plausible counter-argument, you are wasting your time arguing.

There is no point, for example, in mounting an argument that Paris is a more interesting city than Peoria; everybody already knows that, and you are going to have your work cut out for you if you expect to dig up important or interesting arguments to the contrary to use as your foil. I don't say that you will not find *any* arguments to the contrary — only no interesting or important ones. I have heard all these arguments, so I can assure you that they are not the kind of thing you will be tempted to argue against.

When I was growing up, my family lived in Germany and Switzerland; every other summer, we visited my dad's parents in Peoria, and their friends would ask me if it wasn't good to be back in civilization. I did not bother to make the case that Europe was actually quite civilized. It was pretty clear from the outset that there would be disagreement as to standards.

Normally, an argument is only as interesting and important as what it is arguing against. If you are going to make the case that positivism is wrongheaded, for example, do not expect an enormous upsurge of interest. Since most scholars already think that positivism is passé and therefore do not think about it much from one decade to the next, they are not in the market for an interesting new discussion of *how* it was wrong. I'm not saying you won't find any audience at all; you can find an audience for almost anything. Newspapers regularly find audiences for topics like "Is red jello better than green?" and if the article argues that green is better, then all the people who already think so feel vindicated and believe that their time has been well spent in reading this important new update, while all the people who think red is better, or who are outraged that orange wasn't even part of the discussion, get hot under the collar and fire off letters to the editor about how maybe-just-maybe, *if* liberal bias didn't permeate the media, we *might* get some objective discussion going about red (or orange) jello. Scholarship that is trying to make a difference, though, cannot be content with mounting battles against ideas hardly anyone cares about. Save your energy for arguments that matter.

Q Always acknowledge significant counter-arguments and counter-evidence. If you ignore important alternative accounts or evidence, your arguments, explanations, and analyses will be weak. Also be sure to tie in your exposition, analysis, or argument with the relevant scholarly literature. Arguments about whether Peoria is more interesting than Paris or whether red jello is better than green jello do not have to draw on the literature to make their points, partly because there is no scholarly literature on these topics and partly because if there were such a literature no one would read it. For topics like these, shouting and sarcasm will be your best weapons, and if you resort to saying things like, "*Scientific American* had an article in January of 1976 that established once and for all that red jello is best," all the shouting and sarcasm is going to be on the other side and you will lose.

O There is no one best way to organize an argument. The best way to organize your paper is the way that works best for your analysis, argument, or discussion; if your analysis falls flat or if your argument is confusing, your organization may be at fault. An outline and thesis statement can help you see potential problems in advance, but sometimes it is only in the writing itself that the problems with your organization emerge — when it becomes clear, for example, that you have no idea what Lisa Delpit and John Ogbu have to do with your argument, although at one time this connection had seemed so obvious to you as to be hardly worth mentioning.

Q Headings and subheadings help your reader to follow the structure and organization of your paper (or thesis). Some authors use categories as headings and subheadings

("The Teacher's Perspective"; "The Students' Perspective"; "The Parents' Perspective"). Other authors use colorful quotes from their data, contrasting or complementary metaphors, or the names of the theorists discussed in particular sections, among any number of other possibilities. Whatever approach you use, make sure that your decisions help the reader to follow your organization. Headings and subheadings are organizational tools — cues or guide posts. They should *tell* the reader something.

Q Whether or not you use headings and subheadings, your organization has to clarify the relations between paragraphs and sections of your paper. Do not assume that a particular form of organization is inherently logical; you have to *make* it logical in the way you approach the paper. Just because "A" happened first and "B" happened later, it doesn't follow that your paper should take the form "A, B." Chronology is not, in and of itself, organization. Not only might it in some cases be more useful to the reader to have B come first, but the reader wants to know *why either A or B* is in the paper at all. (I realize that not all readers do want to know this. Your roommates, for example, almost certainly could not care less, which is why, when you had them read through your most recent paper for you, they handed it back saying, "It looks fine. Except you spelled 'nucular' as 'nuclear.' I think it's supposed to be 'nucular.'" Don't take me too literally, here. When I say, "the reader," I don't really mean just any reader. What I mean is "the ideal reader," which is graduate-school code for "your instructor.")

To get back to the chronology-as-organization question: if you have a paragraph about something that happened in the seventeenth century followed by a paragraph about something that happened in the nineteenth century, with no indication of what the two paragraphs have to do with one another, readers will not be satisfied with the explanation that you put the paragraph on the seventeenth century first "because it came first." Yes, the seventeenth century came before the nineteenth century, but so did the eighteenth. So did the fifth, for that matter. Why aren't they in your paper? And since more than one thing happened in the seventeenth century, why is it that we're hearing about this one thing but nothing else that took place in that century? What does it have to do with the one thing you discussed from the nineteenth century? (Do not use as your rationale the fact that both A and B appear in the course readings; your instructor knows they are both in the course readings. What he wants to know is whether you see how they are *connected*.)

Q A common form of organization is to state in your introduction what it is you are going to say in the body of your paper, then actually say, in the body of the paper, what it is you have to say, after which, in the conclusion, you say what it was that you said. The reason that this is a common form of organization is that it is the form of organization taught by tenth-grade teachers. As scientists are beginning to verify, only tenth-grade writing instruction has any kind of sticking power. It seems that the research-paper hazing experience U.S. citizens undergo in tenth grade is so traumatic that it effectively wipes out all other notions of writing. The vast majority of high school and college graduates (96.741%) do not remember receiving any writing instruction other than what they were taught in tenth grade. What this means is that there is

considerable power to be had in teaching tenth-grade writing. Anyone looking to influence thousands of people in a way that will be more or less irreversible might want to consider this as a career option.

To say that the say-what-you're-going-to-say-then-say-it-then-say-what-you-said approach to writing is the most common way to organize a paper is not, however, to say that it is the *best* way to organize your writing. The reason it is not the best way to organize your writing is that it is not interesting. It is not too much to say that it is stultifyingly boring. An interesting paper starts off *with* something interesting. An interesting opening paragraph is an indication that what is to follow will be worth reading. You might start out, then, with a quote, a narrative, a powerful claim, eye-catching statistics, or even something funny. An interesting paper does not start out by saying, "In this paper, I will be discussing four points. The points I will be discussing are . . . ." Take the reader right into what matters, right away. *Later*, you can tell them how you will be discussing the issue.

Q I don't want to give the impression that, having said something once, you are done with it forever, and if the reader didn't pick up on it the first and only time you said it, tough luck. Rather, I am suggesting that you not repeat your points in such a way as to make it appear that you think of your readers as particularly slow on the uptake and in need of constant reminders as to what the paper is even about. One of the reasons that the say-what-you're-going-to-say-then-say-it-then-say-what-you-said model of organization is so mind-numbingly boring in practice is that most people do not leave well enough alone. If a point needs to be made three times, they figure, then saying it eight times will not go amiss. Might as well say it a nice round ten times and hammer that baby home. A lot of professors, it is true, actually prefer this approach. It may be in part because they have read so many student papers in which they never had a clue as to what the paper was about, that they insist on any significant point being made at least three times, assuming that that way they stand a better chance of figuring out what the student thinks the paper is saying. Obviously, if your instructor tells you to write that way, you would be wise to play along. I'm just telling you that it's not the only way to write and it is definitely not the most interesting way to write.

O There is a difference between repeating yourself and providing sign posts that will show readers where the argument is headed. I am not suggesting that you never return to a point; I am suggesting that you not make exactly the same points over and over again. If your readers are thinking, "I know, I know; you *said* that already," you are repeating yourself. But readers may very well want you to give them some sense of where the argument is leading and how things are fitting together. This is not a matter of repeating points already made or about to be made; it is a matter of giving the reader sign posts along the way. The sign is not the destination. When you provide your readers with sign posts, you should be helping them to integrate the argument or analysis, not simply saying beforehand what you are going to be saying later.

Q By the same token, your conclusion — the "welcome to your destination" placard — should not be merely a review of the points you have already made. Like the

conclusion of a novel, it should round things out, bring closure to the reading experience. While the conclusion should not introduce big new points, it should do more than summarize the previous material. For example, it might return us in a surprising way to an image or anecdote used at the beginning of the paper, giving us a sense of having come full circle. If we are able to see the original image in fresh terms as a result of the paper, we will come away with a more vivid awareness of your analysis. The criterion for the conclusion is quite simple: it should be interesting as well as helpful.

O An example of providing guidance through repetition (i.e., The Wrong Way, enhanced in the following sample by other bad writing practices) would be something like this:

In this discussion, I will be telling you why it is a bad idea for any school to have orange as one of its school colors. In my argument, it will be argued that orange is not a good color and that many people hate it. It will also be stated in this paper that even if orange were a good color, it does not go very well with a lot of other colors that most people like better. Also very true is the point that orange fades quickly in the wash. These points will go to prove my argument that it is a bad idea for any school to have orange as one of its school colors.

it is a bad idea for any school to have orange as one of its school colors. One reason for this is that orange is not a good color and many people hate it. Proof of this can be found in the following research articles, which agree with my point (Purple, 1975; Purple & Red, 1998; Purple & Blue, 1999a; Purple & Blue, 1999b; Purple & White, 1999; Purple & Grey, 2000).

As these articles point out, even if orange were a good color, it does not go very well with a lot of other colors that most people like better. For example, if you like red, orange clashes with it. Also, if you like purple, orange clashes with that too. Actually, even if you like orange, most oranges clash with other shades of orange. All of which goes to prove that most colors do not go with orange and so you always have to wear orange with the same colors, like white or black, or else you have to wear orange with a color that does not go very well with it, or even one that really clashes with it. Examples of this would be red and purple, for example.

Third, orange fades quickly in the wash. This is not actually bad if you hate orange, because at least then there is less of it, but what if you like it? Even if you like orange, it is not a good color for your school colors because you have to wear it every time and then you are always washing it and then it will fade, and then you will just have to buy more orange stuff, which is expensive, especially if you don't like orange in the first place, which a lot of people don't (Purple, 1975; Purple & Red, 1998; Purple & Blue, 1999a; Purple & Blue, 1999b; Purple & White, 1999;

Purple & Grey, 2000).

In conclusion, it is a bad idea for any school to have orange as one of its school colors. As I have argued, orange is not a good color because many people hate it. Also, even if orange were a good color, it does not go very well with a lot of other colors that most people like better, like purple and red. Finally, it is also very true that orange fades quickly in the wash. These points go to prove my argument that it is a bad idea for any school to have orange as one of its school colors.

Q A better way to provide sign posts for this complex argument might be something like this. (The sign posts are marked at the beginning of the relevant sentence with a "@ .")

"Orange," Picasso once said, "is the color of fascists." Klimt, Botticelli, and Varo, among thousands of other artists, have said much the same thing. Among artists and other freethinkers, it is an accepted fact that orange is a dangerously dictatorish color. Perhaps, then, it is not an accident that so many American schools feature orange among their school colors. @ The use of orange in a school's colors, I shall argue, is nothing less than a coldblooded attempt to indoctrinate Americans into a state of mindless obedience.

Americans do not agree on much; they do not agree on whether giving children guns is a fundamental right, whether the millennium starts in 2000 or 2001, or whether using your left turn signal is a foolhardy concession to the enemy. They do, however, agree on one thing: orange is a bad color to use in any clothing except Halloween costumes. No fewer than 99% of those interviewed recently in a scientific sample agreed that this was a fact. Given this widespread agreement, the insistence of some schools on mandating orange clothing at sports events can only be seen as an attempt to quash the independent spirit of freethinking Americans. @ If Americans who, of their own free will, acknowledge that orange is a foul color nevertheless can be manipulated into wearing the color in order to prove their loyalty to their school, the road to a brainwashed populace can be said to be well paved.

@ Further evidence of the indoctrination of Americans through the mandating of orange apparel can be found in the pairing of orange with other colors that either clash with it or lose any appeal they once had through proximity to orange. Even brown, black, and white, when coupled with orange, become buffoonish. Asking people to wear colors other than these with orange is a test of their gullibility. @ If right-thinking Americans can be brought not only to wear orange but to wear it with purple, red, blue, green, pink, mauve, grey, turquoise, and yellow, can police checkpoints be far behind?

For school patriots who have not forgotten the truth about the color orange, the one saving grace is that orange fades rather quickly. A canny

few have discovered that one can wash an orange sweatshirt a couple dozen times in a row and then claim to be wearing the faded-out result in sentimental tribute to decades of colorblind patriotism. Yet for most Americans the flash-fading of orange is reason only to buy more orange apparel. Stores on campuses that have school colors such as grey and green sell 46% fewer replacement sweatshirts than do stores on campuses with orange as one of the school colors. @ Mindlessness, in short, can be made to pay. Capitalism thrives on this kind of insidious, though seemingly innocuous indoctrination.

The sad evidence that the orange-indoctrination ploy has succeeded can be seen in Americans' lemming-like patterns of voting — although there is room for optimism in the fact that orange cars sell very poorly indeed. Still, if Americans know enough not to buy orange cars, why do they continue to buy orange sweatshirts? Despite Americans' willingness to concede that orange has no place in clothing other than costumes, and despite the recognized incompatibility of orange with any other color that anyone could care about, Americans buy orange school clothing in numbers far surpassing those connected with green, grey, and other desirable colors. @ The dictatorship of the mind may not yet be complete, but there is no doubt that schools are doing their part in the process. As Picasso also once said, "Schools that care about democracy and freedom will not impose ugly color combinations on their students." And it is no coincidence that Thomas Jefferson agreed with him.

Notice, in this example, that no point is restated directly and that there is no need to say, "first," "second," "third," etc. Instead, the argument builds in such a way as to take up previous points and weave them into an increasingly powerful analysis. The overall argument is stated up front as a sign post, and there are other sign posts along the way helping the reader to integrate new points into the analysis, but there is no flatfooted restatement of points the reader already understands. Well, there may be a slight tendency here to insist on the argument a little too much. Excessiveness, intensity, and neurotic overstatement, however, are cherished attributes of the scholarly writer's "voice." That is not the same as formulaic repetitiveness.

O Your paper must make significant references to the academic literature to which the course is addressed. This means not simply acknowledging that literature by referring to it in passing but taking it up as something to engage with: *using* the scholarly literature as the material through which the paper works. You do not have to agree with everything you have read, but you do have to show that you understand it, that your work has been informed by it, and that you have been moved to at least sharpen your thinking in response to it.

Q Unless you are specifically directed to do a research paper that draws on readings from outside the course, you should draw the bulk of your supporting material from the course itself. Your instructor needs to see how you are making sense of, critiquing,

and/or synthesizing materials from the course. If most of your references are to articles or books from other courses, the instructor may assume that you have not done the reading for the course — or that you have turned in a paper written for another course. Normally, you can *also* use outside readings, but the emphasis needs to be on the course materials.

○ When drawing on an article or book, quote material directly if it provides an important foil or key supporting evidence for your argument or if it is crucial to what you are analyzing, but don't go overboard. For the most part, you should be quoting fairly brief passages. If you find yourself transcribing page-long quotations or including three or four quotations per page, you almost certainly are quoting too much. Although the author might very well agree with your view that you could not possibly say things as well as she said them, so that it really would be best if you quoted her at length, your thinking about the article or book will be stronger if you can summarize her points in your own words. The purpose of class papers is for students to *use* what the author said in some learning exercise of their own, not just transcribe it. When you quote something from a text, you should be commenting or building on it in some way, rather than treating it as if its significance to your paper were self-evident.

○ Summarizing in your own words does not mean changing a word here and there in the text so as to be able to say, without quoting, "Du Bois's view was that it is an odd sensation, this double-consciousness, this feeling of looking at oneself through others' eyes, etc." That is plagiarism. Even if you clearly state that you are talking about Du Bois, you cannot use his phrasing without quoting him, unless you are repeating something you have quoted earlier. (For example, you don't need to put "double-consciousness" in quotes after your first use of it in a paper.) Either quote the original passage directly ("It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others . . .") or summarize the point in words that are clearly your own (e.g., "Du Bois coined the term 'double-consciousness' to describe the alienation that African Americans experience in a racist society. Whereas a white man experiences himself as a subject, a black man must also see himself 'through the eyes of others' — he senses himself as an object, as well as a subject").

○ When you quote something, make something of it. Tell the reader why it is worth attending to and where the quoted passage takes the argument or analysis. You are free to say whether you agree with the point, but that should not be your focus. In scholarly papers, you are not being asked simply to say what you believe, nor are you being asked whether you agree with an author. You are being asked to think about the arguments and analyses to which you have been exposed and to pursue these in some fruitful direction. What matters is the argument or analysis itself (and, in some cases, the counter-arguments). Although you can bring your opinion into the discussion, from a scholarly perspective your opinion only becomes interesting when it engages the argument or analysis at stake.

Q Do not make your own opinions the reference point for others. In other words, do not write, "Dewey agrees with me that . . . ." As my friend Georgia Johnson reminds her students, Dewey said it first; you, therefore, will have to agree with *him*. No doubt if Dewey were around today and had had the opportunity to study your ideas, he would indeed agree with you. Under the circumstances, however, you will have to be the one doing the agreeing.

O In general, you cannot assume that Dewey, Giroux, Rogoff, or other leading educational theorists have read your complete works. We know for sure that Dewey has not done so. It is not impossible, on the other hand, that Giroux and Rogoff have read your work and agree with you. If they have contacted you directly to tell you so, feel free to mention it. If, on the other hand, you have no real evidence that they have ever heard of you, you will need to agree with them instead.

Q The same goes for disagreement. Dewey does not disagree with you; you disagree with him. If you feel strongly that Dewey *would* have disagreed with you if he had ever met you, and that this point absolutely must appear in your paper, frame the point in the subjunctive. "Had Dewey ever met me," you can say, "he would have known that I think science is bunk. Obviously he would have disagreed with me on this point." Most instructors will be less than enthralled with this kind of approach, however. If you are going to invent imaginary conversations, it is better to speculate about the conversations that Dewey might have had with Judith Butler or Cornel West, say, and leave yourself out of it.

O The thing that will annoy most of you about graduate school is that you will be asked to explain things when you don't want to. Either it will seem obvious to you why X is the case or you will have no idea why X is the case; either way, you will not want to be bothered with explanations. Some of you will be irritated that your audience even requires an explanation. "They should already know all this," you will object, "and if they don't, I'm not going to explain it. I have more important things to do." You might as well hear it from me: no, you do not have better things to do. Not yet, anyway. If you are a graduate student, you will be expected to engage ideas in a scholarly way, and to a large degree, explaining is what scholarship is all about.

Q That's not to say that scholarship isn't also about exploring and testing new ideas, tearing things apart, and playing with possibilities. The purposes of scholarly writing in education include explaining ideas or experience in ways that go beyond common sense (which may or may not mean *against* common sense); developing theories that account for experience in new, more careful, more inclusive, and/or more sensitive ways; providing systematic documentation for claims; testing hypotheses; using new tools and methods (including theories) to reveal previously hidden possibilities or interpretations; disrupting existing paradigms in productive ways; critiquing epistemic, cultural, pedagogical, and other assumptions; conducting observations that may reveal discrepancies in existing theories; refining ideas or theories; and exploring areas of experience that have until now been overlooked in relation to education. But whether

your analysis is primarily expository or generative, descriptive or provocative, you will need to explain what you are discussing.

○ Those of you who like arguing may have thought that you would fit right into graduate school, where, you figured, mostly the only thing anybody does *is* argue. Unfortunately, not just any style of argument will do, in graduate school. If you have a background in forensic debate, for example, you may find it difficult at first to adapt to the scholarly emphasis on explaining and developing your points. Having honed your skills at making rat-tat-tat bullet points or main-idea, debate-style points, you may feel that going into explanations means being long-winded and inflating your quickly-grasped arguments into tedious pontifications. That would be a mistake. Do not trade in tight arguments for tedious pontifications. What we are looking for in academia is not rambling, self-indulgent droning but thoughtful, well-developed articulation. Okay, okay. We are prepared to tolerate any amount of rambling, self-indulgent droning, but not from amateurs. You have to earn the right to that kind of obnoxiousness. It's like being a temperamental movie star: they didn't get where they are by *being* temperamental. If you are an actor, *first* you have to get to the point where you are earning in the high twenty or thirty millions; *then*, you can tick everyone off by acting paranoid and put upon. In academia, *first* you have to be earning in the low one hundred thousands, *then* every third book you write can wallow in warmed-over platitudes and self-congratulation. Graduate students, since they are not earning that kind of money, are expected to meet different standards. From graduate students we expect clarity, richness, and sharp, new, powerful insights.

But to return to my point: the *kind* of clarity, richness, and insight that academia calls for is not the same as that called for in debate (or journalism or political propaganda). Despite their common interest in the structure of the argument, debates and academic arguments have quite different ends. One is concerned primarily with persuasion; the other focuses on education and explication. Think of it this way: both prose and poetry can be literature, but they go about the construction of literary meaning in very different ways. Similarly, both debate and academic analysis aspire to sharp argumentation, but they go about constructing an argument in very different ways. If a good debate is like a poem, good academic writing is like lyrical prose. Just as writing a short story is not a matter of "translating" a poem into windy prose but means starting *from* the specific demands of the short story genre, writing good scholarly prose is not a matter of dragging out debate-style points but means taking on the educational and intellectual project of framing (or reframing) meaning for readers so that a particular theoretical perspective or analysis gradually clicks into focus.

○ To test your ideas and claims, and to communicate them effectively, you need to develop them — to explain them in sufficient detail so as to address nuances and provide specifics. If your arguments or descriptions are too elliptical, readers may not be able to follow them — or they may read into them exactly what you are trying to argue against. Say that you want to lay out a new way of thinking about literacy or science education; if you plan to overturn prevailing assumptions about literacy or science education, you will need to *show* your audience how to think about such

education in the way you want them to think about it. You can't just tell your audience what you think and expect them to take your word for it; you will have to problematize the prevailing views and provide evidence and arguments for your alternative view.

O In his autobiography, *Wake Me When It's Funny*, Garry Marshall offers an anecdote about starting out as a script writer that speaks to the need for explanation. After he and his writing partner wrote a scene for *The Dick Van Dyke Show* in which they indicated that Dick Van Dyke was to "put . . . his cummerbund on funny," director Carl Reiner called in the writers to ask what they had in mind with this line of stage direction. Marshall told him, "You know, Dick does something funny, some physical comedy, when he puts on the cummerbund." The writers' job, Reiner pointed out, was to "write it funny" (emphasis added). "The studio guard," he said, "could write 'Dick puts his cummerbund on funny.' From you guys we need more. You know why? Because that's why we pay you money." The same principle applies to scholars. Your job is not merely to indicate that, from your perspective, something is important or interesting, or to describe something as, in your opinion, beautiful or violent or caring or aggressive. You have to specify exactly what you mean by that — to lay it out for the reader so that she can see it for herself. Thus, you have to show *why* something is important or show what you *mean* by "violent," since different people may understand such terms very differently. Some readers might disagree that what you consider violent (or important) *is* in fact violent (or important). Like a script writer, you need to provide the close observation and attention to detail that makes the ideas come to life, makes them workable and usable and specific. (You, however, are not being paid money. Other than that, it's the same thing.)

O Some final principles to remember: 1) Do not use twelve words to say what one word could say *unless* using more words makes your point more vivid rather than less so. 2) Don't circle around what you have to say; say it. 3) And when you say something, make sure it speaks *distinctively* to your point. If it sounds as if you could be talking about one of a number of possible topics, you are being too vague.

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