CHAPTER TWO

Academic Reading

EFFECTIVE READING HABITS
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ANALYSIS
SUMMARY
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EFFECTIVE READING HABITS

The Need to Read

A student once told me he had a confession to make. I prepared myself for the worst—a crime he'd committed, or a tragedy in his family—but he simply wanted me to know that reading wasn't exactly his favorite thing to do.

That student was far from alone. Sure, most students do a lot of *informal* reading: if you're writing texts and email messages and online posts, you're reading them, too. However, reading complex and challenging material isn't the way the average student unwinds after a long day. Even students who love to read often find themselves overwhelmed by the amount of material they're assigned in their first year in college.

Still, reading effectively is a primary concern in just about *all* college courses, whatever the subject matter, and in nearly every college composition class you're going to have to write at least one essay that responds to a written text. In most composition classes, essays by professional writers will be central to the curriculum. Understanding what you read is crucial;

therefore, even if you initially take longer to comprehend your assignment, doing so will always pay off in time saved later on.

Timesaver Tip: Think of reading as the first step in your writing process. Because academic essays usually respond to or draw upon written work by other sources, carefully reading your assignments, and saving all the writing you do along the way, will provide you with essential material for composing your essay.

Reading Again—and Again (and Again . . .)

The sooner you accept the fact that reading is a central part of your college education, the sooner you can set about devising ways to make the reading easier and more time efficient.

In the Introduction, you saw how breaking large writing assignments into smaller chunks makes them easier to complete. That's certainly the case with reading as well, with the need to prioritize being just as crucial. As you decide on a reading schedule, ask yourself the following questions:

- How long and how difficult is the reading? Is it a brief personal opinion piece or a dense article on international politics? Do I have any background knowledge of the subject matter?
- How long do I think it will realistically take to complete the reading, and when am I supposed to complete it?
- How will I be assessed on the reading? A quiz? An exam? An essay?
- How soon after the reading is due will that assessment take place?
- What are the consequences of *not* doing the reading? Looking foolish in class? Failing an important quiz? Failing the class itself?

For most college writing classes, the readings, at least initially, are fairly short. Try to read assignments of fewer than 10 pages at least twice, ideally more. If you're a slow reader, that means not waiting until the night before an assignment is due.

*Re*reading a short assignment the night before it is discussed has the advantage of making you look smart in class. Moreover, college professors love to give reading quizzes, and these quizzes often focus on specifics that you will have forgotten if the text is no longer fresh in your memory.

Before diving into an assigned reading, it's usually a good idea to **preview**, or look over, the text. Here are some useful questions to ask when previewing a piece of writing:

- What is the tone of the title? Funny? Serious? Threatening? Pleading?
- As you skim through the article, what jumps out at you? Are there any visuals? Words in bold or colored fonts?
- Jot down the titles of any headings in the piece. What purpose do they appear to serve?
- Reread the introduction and conclusion. What seems to be the author's main point?
- What, if anything, does the author want you do to do after reading the piece?
- Where was the piece published? Is it difficult for a writer to be published in that venue, or can anyone post anything?

Pre-reading strategies are important, but you'll need to follow a preview with a **close reading**, which means paying careful and sustained attention to the text in front of you. I'll talk about strategies for close reading throughout the rest of this chapter, but one important point to remember is that it will require you to *slow down*. You skim something because you want to get through it quickly and identify the main points. You read something carefully because someone—usually your instructor—has told you it's worth getting to know better. It's like the difference between chatting briefly with someone online and going out on an actual date. There's a commitment involved in close reading, even if, as in the case of a very short essay, it's only a commitment of fifteen or twenty minutes.

Of course, if you're assigned a book-length work of nonfiction or fiction, you'll need more concentration and more *time*, which returns us to our earlier discussion of the need to prioritize, to guard those rare empty slots in your schedule, and to say no to passing temptations. Entering a difficult text is like entering the virtual world of a video game whose rules you don't immediately understand. You need to hang around for a while and figure things out. The more challenging the material, the more frequently you'll need to return to it, and the more slowly you'll have to proceed.

Timesaver Tip: Assess the importance of each reading. You can often tell how important a reading is from the syllabus and your instructor's in-class comments. Give each reading assignment its proper due: don't make the mistake of spending tons of time on a piece that is obviously of limited importance, while skimming over something that is crucial to the class.

Reading in a Productive Space

In the previous chapter, I talked about the benefits of writing in a quiet place. The same goes for reading, only more so. When you're writing, your brain is actively constructing meaning. It has to function whether it wants to or not, so it can often muscle its way through distractions. When you read, though, it's easier to lose focus and let your mind drift from the text.

Students know that finding a quiet place isn't as easy as teachers think. As noted in the introduction, minimizing distractions is key. If you can't escape the din of a noisy living environment, there are always earplugs. Or maybe you prefer to muffle the chaos with ear buds and some soothing instrumental music. And don't forget proper lighting: you shouldn't have to strain to see the words.

In the past, someone may have told you that the only way to study was to cram for hours, but we retain material best when our minds are fresh. If you reach a point where you're no longer assimilating the assigned material, it's best to take a break, to stretch or get some exercise.

Finally, when you reach a wall and feel as though you never want to look at another clump of letters for the rest of your life, remember that no matter what you're reading—even if the subject is far from your normal areas of interest—you're learning new information about the world, or new ways of thinking about yourself. Isn't that one of the reasons you came to college in the first place?

A Sample Article

We've been discussing reading strategies without having an actual reading to examine, so let's look at the sort of short piece that might be assigned early in a writing class. The following editorial appeared as a "My Turn" column in *Newsweek* magazine in September of 2000. The author is Audrey Rock-Richardson and the title is "Pay Your Own Way (Then Thank Mom)." Most of the articles you read for this class will make fuller use of secondary sources—that is, supporting evidence by other authors—and I'll discuss the use of secondary sources extensively later in the book. However, for now, let's focus on the argument Rock-Richardson makes and how she uses personal experience to justify her beliefs. (Note: the paragraphs below are numbered so that we can refer back to them more easily.)

Pay Your Own Way (Then Thank Mom)
Audrey Rock-Richardson

[1] Is it me, or are students these days lazy? I'm not talking about tweens who don't want to do their homework or make their bed. I'm referring to people in legal adulthood who are in the process of making hugely consequential life decisions. And collectively, their attitude is that they simply cannot pay for college.

[2] Don't get me wrong. I realize that there are people out there who pay their own tuition. I know that some cannot put themselves through school because of disabilities or extenuating circumstances. But I have to say: the notion that parents must finance their children's education is ridiculous.

[3] During college I consistently endured comments from peers with scholarships and loans, peers who had new Jeeps and expensive apartments, all who would say to me, eyes bulging, "You mean your parents didn't help you at all?"

[4] I resented my fellow students for asking this, first because they made it sound like my parents were demons, and second because they were insinuating that I wasn't capable of paying my own way. "How did you pay tuition?" they'd ask. My response was simple: "I worked." They would look at me blankly, as though I had told them I'd gone to the moon.

[5] As an undergrad (University of Utah, 1998), I put myself through two solid years of full-tuition college by working as a day-care provider for $4.75 an hour. I then married and finished out seven more quarters by working as an interpreter for the deaf and a tutor in a private school.

[6] I didn't work during high school or save for years. I simply got a job the summer following graduation and worked 40 hours a week. I didn't eat out every weekend, shop a lot or own a car. I sacrificed. I was striving for something bigger and longer-lasting than the next kegger.

[7] Looking at the numbers now, I'm not sure how I managed to cover all the costs of my education. But I did. And I bought every single textbook and pencil myself, too.

[8] I remember sitting in a classroom one afternoon during my senior year, listening to everyone introduce themselves. Many students mentioned their part-time jobs. There were several members of a sorority in the class. When it came to the first girl, she told us her name and that she was a sophomore. "Oh," she added, "I major in communications." After an awkward silence, the teacher asked, "Do you work?"

[9] "Oh, no," she said emphatically, "I go to school full time." (As if those of us who were employed weren't really serious about our classes.)

[10] The girl went on to explain that her parents were paying tuition and for her to live in a sorority house (complete with a cook, I later found out). She was taking roughly 13 credit hours. And she was too busy to work.

[11] I, on the other hand, was taking 18, count 'em, 18 credit hours so I could graduate within four years. I worked 25 hours a week so my husband and I could pay tuition without future loan debt. And here's the kicker: I pulled straight A's.

[12] I caught a glimpse of that same girl's report card at the end of the quarter, and she pulled C's and a few B's, which didn't surprise me. Having to juggle tasks forces you to prioritize, a skill she hadn't learned.

[13] I'm weary of hearing kids talk about getting financial help from their parents as though they're entitled to it. I am equally tired of hearing stressed-out parents groaning, "How are we going to pay for his or her college?" Why do they feel obligated?

[14] I do not feel responsible for my daughter's education. She'll find a way to put herself through if she wants to go badly enough. And (I'm risking sounding like my mom here), she'll thank me later. I can say this because I honestly, wholeheartedly thank my parents for giving me that experience.

[15] I'm not saying that it's fun. It's not. I spent the first two years of school cleaning up after 4-year-olds for the aforementioned $4.75 an hour and taking a public bus to campus. My husband and I spent the second two struggling to pay our tuition. We lived in a cinder-block apartment with little privacy and no dishwasher.

[16] Lest I sound like a hypocrite, yes, I would have taken free college money had the opportunity presented itself. However, because my parents put themselves through school they expected me to do the same. And, frankly, I'm proud of myself. I feel a sense of accomplishment that I believe I couldn't have gained from 50 college degrees all paid for by someone else.

[17] Getting through school on our own paid off in every way. My husband runs his own business, a demanding but profitable job. I write part time and work as a mother full time. I believe the fact that we are happy and financially stable is a direct result of our learning how to manage time and money in college.

[18] So, kids, give your parents a break. Contrary to popular belief, you can pay tuition by yourself. And you might just thank your mother for it, too.

ANNOTATION

Earlier, we discussed the importance of slowing down when closely reading a text. One of the best ways to slow down is to **annotate**, that is, to make notes or comments on your reading. Annotation requires you to stay focused and actively engage with the text. Even in the digital age, the easiest way to annotate remains taking a pen or pencil to a printed page. When you do so:

- Try to identify the thesis, or main point.
- Write short questions in the margins.
- Circle words you need to look up.
- Note passages where you disagree with the author.
- Note places where the same idea occurs more than once.
- Use arrows to connect important passages.
- Highlight or underline material that you think is significant. Note: make sure you're selectively marking material. A paragraph covered in fluorescent yellow has as little value as one with no highlighting at all.

There's nothing like practice, so before you look at the annotation in Figure 2.1, go back and try annotating the first three paragraphs of "Pay Your Own Way." When you're finished, compare what you've done with what's in the book. What does the textbook point out that you wish you'd noticed? What did you see that I missed? (While you can obviously skip ahead and read my annotation, why not try it yourself first to see how you do?)

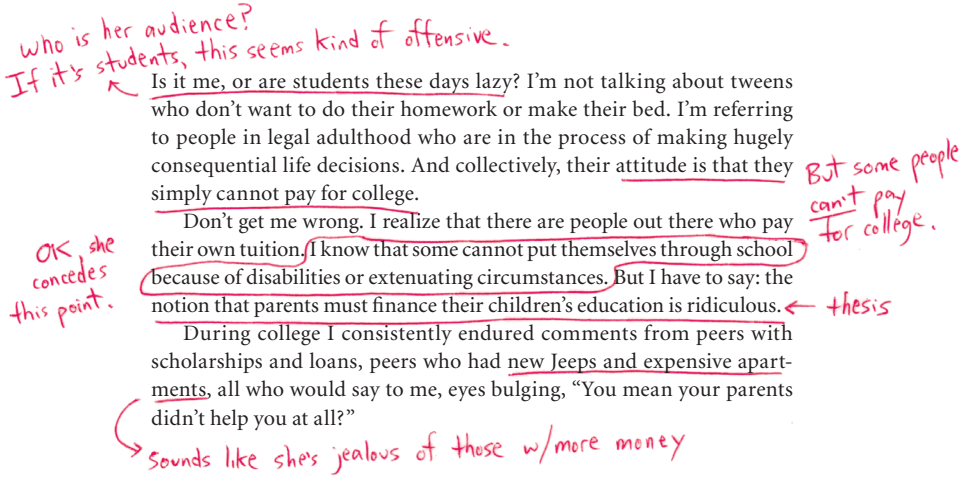

Figure 2.1 *Annotation of First Three Paragraphs*

As an active reader, what you think about the text is as important as what the author has written. Active reading is **critical reading**, which means refusing to take *anything* for granted. One benefit of critical reading is that even when your assignment is on the dull side, your engagement with it doesn't have to be. Your pen or pencil should be flying as you engage with the author as though the two of you were sitting in a coffee house having an animated conversation.

Another mark of a strong reader is the unwillingness to tolerate confusion. If you don't know what something means, you make every effort to find out. You can't do that if you're a "hands-off" reader. If you don't understand a piece, your commentary on it will be inaccurate, hazy, and just plain boring.

If your vocabulary isn't as strong as you might wish, be sure to look up any word that you can't confidently define. Back in the day, that meant keeping a dictionary nearby, but now you're just an app on your phone or an icon on your desktop away from a definition. Of course, writing down or typing the definition will help you retain it, and as you build your vocabulary, your reading speed and comprehension will increase.

One sure-fire way to identify the words you don't know in a difficult reading is to circle them as you go along. Don't worry about defining the words on your first reading—just do the best you can to make sense of the piece. Then look up each word, write down its definition, and take another shot at the reading: you'll be surprised how much clearer it is the second time around.

Some students refrain from writing in their books because they plan on selling the book back to the bookstore after the class is over, but that's shortsighted. The bookstore at my college estimates that the difference between returning a textbook that's used and unmarked versus one that's used and heavily annotated is about five dollars. In other words, your understanding of the material, and therefore your grade in this class, can be significantly improved for the price of a decent cheeseburger.

DOUBLE-ENTRY JOURNAL

Annotations, while necessary, can be messy. If you'd like to write out more substantial commentary that you might use later in your own essay, consider creating a **double-entry journal**. Making a double-entry journal is easy. Draw a line down the middle of a piece of paper. On the left side write "Summary," and on the right side put "Response." Now jot down each of the essay's main points on the left; this is basically the "What *It* Said" side. Then respond with comments and questions in the right-hand column, the "What *I* Think About It" side. Take a look at Figure 2.2, which contains responses to several points made by Audrey Rock-Richardson:

Summary	Response
—Rock-Richardson thinks it's "ridiculous" for parents to have to pay for their kids' education.	—Frankly, I think her thesis says more about her than it does about other students. Okay, her parents refused to pay for her college and she figured out how to get a degree. That's great. But why should every other student be subject to the same conditions? Lots of parents have great memories of their college days, and they want their children to have the same sense of freedom and fun. What's wrong with that?
—Toward the end of the essay, Rock-Richardson admits that she "would have taken free college money had the opportunity presented itself."	—This point seems to undercut a lot of her self-righteousness. She goes on to say that she's "proud" she didn't ever have the opportunity to get that extra money, but isn't that sour grapes, like saying, "I'm so glad I ran out of gas and had to push my car for a mile—it was really great exercise!"

Figure 2.2 *Double-Entry Journal*

ANALYSIS

Rhetorical Analysis

What we've just being doing—closely reading, commenting on, agreeing or arguing with the text—might be called **rhetorical analysis**: looking at how an author, her text, and her audience interact with one another.

"Rhetoric" is a loaded word these days, but it doesn't have to equal "insincerity." In the past, mastering rhetoric—the art of persuasive speaking and writing—was considered a cornerstone of education, so much so that books like this one, which describe ways for students to become better writers, are often called "rhetorics." Think about it: we still know the names of famous rhetoricians like Plato and Aristotle and Cicero, even if we haven't read their work.

And rhetorical analysis is not as scary as it sounds. Some instructors might argue it's just a fancy way of saying "close reading."

Here is a list of questions you might think of as follow-ups to the preview

questions. If you want to know *why* you find a writer's work persuasive or unconvincing, the answer may lie in your responses:

- Who is the author?
- What is the author's thesis and overall argument?
- What assumptions is the author making?
- What evidence does the author offer to support his or her claim?
- Who is the primary audience for the piece?
- Who is the secondary audience?
- Is the author knowledgeable and even-handed in her discussion?

"Genre" is a big word in composition these days. A **genre** is a category of writing. It could mean anything from a poem or a play to a blog post or an advertisement. The main thing to remember is that each genre of writing employs its own widely acknowledged set of forms and techniques. *Where* a piece of writing appears is important because different audiences have different expectations.

We don't, for instance, expect the same formality in a Facebook post that we'd want to see in an editorial written for the *New York Times*. Before they were phased out, the "My Turn" columns in *Newsweek* were generally informal, like Rock-Richardson's, but readers could assume the assertions in the essay had been fact-checked by the magazine's editors.

Still, as active, critical readers, we may well ask questions of Rock-Richardson. Why was it so important for her to argue in a national magazine that students ought to pay for their own college education? Does she honestly believe working and going to school leads to happiness and personal responsibility, or is she just jealous of all the students who got a free ride? Is she exaggerating how much she worked and how little money she made? Did she really think she could change her readers' minds? Did she change yours?

Analyzing Visuals

We'll be looking more closely at how you might use images in your own writing in Chapters 7 and 10. For now, let's think about how visuals can be analyzed in conjunction with their accompanying text. If you're assigned a reading that includes photos or drawings or charts and graphs, you'll want to ask yourself how they support, contradict, or complicate the written text.

"Pay Your Own Way" contains no visuals, but suppose the article had included two photographs: one of several college-aged girls getting sloppy drunk, and another of a diligent-looking young woman at a job with cash

in her hand. If we have been influenced by North America's culture of hard work, we would probably look down our noses at the women in the first photograph while admiring the woman in the second.

And the power of these visuals would be conveyed by *implication*: we readers would infer that the drunk girls were meant to represent the sorority girls in Rock-Richardson's class, who presumably were always at "the next kegger," while the hardworking girl was a stand-in for the author herself. We might come to these conclusions even if we assumed that the images had no personal connection to the author or her essay whatsoever.

That's something of a trick, obviously, and genre really matters here. We're generally skeptical of the images used in advertising. We know that just because we use a certain toothpaste or deodorant, we're not really going to be overwhelmed with admirers. However, we may be less on our guard when an image appears in an established magazine, or a textbook.

Let's take a brief detour from "Pay Your Own Way" and look at this photograph from 1912 to see how a single relatively neutral image might be used by a writer. The photo was taken by Lewis Wickes Hines and has the somewhat bland title of "Workers at the Weaving Machine." The photograph shows an early industrial factory, with three workers in the foreground attending to cotton looms. The workers appear to be well-dressed, but because their backs are to us, we cannot see the expressions on their faces.

Workers at the Weaving Machine

Suppose the photo appeared in an article entitled "Workers Earn a Living Wage for the First Time, Thanks to the Weaving Machine." You might think, "How lucky these three people are to have safe, steady jobs. They must be relatively happy in their work."

Then imagine how quickly your opinion of this image would change if the photograph appeared in an article about the horrors of the Industrial Age called "Workers Exploited at a Weaving Machine." Suddenly, these "faceless" laborers have become victims of capitalism rather than beneficiaries of new technology.

The picture, of course, hasn't changed at all, but the context in which it appears has forced you to interpret it in vastly different ways. It *seems* like solid evidence, but, really, what exactly does it prove?

SUMMARY

Up to this point, we've been responding to Rock-Richardson's article primarily to tease out and respond to its main points. However, the ultimate of aim of reading in a college class is usually to respond in some way to the article.

Let's say the assignment for your first essay is to state the extent to which you agree or disagree with "Pay Your Own Way (Then Thank Mom)." Essays responding to a single article typically begin by summarizing that article. Your reader needs to quickly distinguish what the other person is saying from what you're saying, and a clear, concise summary allows you to acknowledge the important points of the text you're writing about and then move on to your own ideas.

Identifying an article writer's ideas so that you can differentiate them from your own may sound like a straightforward process, but it turns out to be more problematic than you might think, which is why so many college professors consider summary such a crucial part of academic writing.

As a reminder, a **summary** is a concise statement of the main points found in a piece of writing. As you attempt to summarize a reading, keep in mind the following tips:

- A short summary uses only your own words.
- Longer summaries may very briefly borrow the writer's language, but if you do, you need to quote those words or phrases.
- A summary should be accurate and objective: this is not the place to begin arguing your own point of view.
- A summary should indicate the source, including the author and the title of her or his piece.

Without gazing down the page, see if you can summarize this article. Remember to leave out the details and use your own words. And be sure you tell us the author and the title of the work.

Here's my attempt:

> In her essay, "Pay Your Own Way (Then Thank Mom)," Audrey Rock-Richardson argues that covering their own college education expenses teaches students the value of responsibility and hard work, making them more likely to be happy and self-sufficient after graduation.

It's not perfect, but this summary manages to tick off the points listed on the previous page. It uses only my own words; it's accurate and objective; and it indicates the source, including the author and the title of the piece.

Summarizing this article turns out to be relatively painless because much of the piece is taken up with Rock-Richardson's specific examples of how hard she worked in comparison to her fellow students. Those are the very details that *shouldn't* be part of a summary; leaving them out makes it easier to isolate her main points.

Unless your instructor indicates otherwise, summaries don't have to be a single sentence. Also, you'll notice that in the previous paragraph I refer to the author as "Rock-Richardson" rather than "Audrey." The conventions of academic writing require us to use the author's last name.

Summarizing requires you to look closely at the material, to differentiate between a main point and a supporting detail. If you can accurately summarize a complex reading, then you've understood it. It's a skill you'll use in every class you take, and, most likely, throughout your working life.

REVERSE OUTLINE

If you're having trouble summarizing a reading, you might try a "reverse outline." Usually when you make an outline, you're doing it in preparation

for writing an essay. In a **reverse outline**, by contrast, you already have the essay, so you fill in the outline by identifying the thesis, topic sentences and main pieces of evidence. (See Chapter 4 for a full discussion of thesis and organization.) If the margins are large enough, you can write the reverse outline on the page itself, although this exercise generally looks neater and is easier to follow if you use your own paper and start from scratch.

A reverse outline of "Pay Your Own Way" might look like this:

Para.1: Hook: Students these days are lazy.
Para. 2: Thesis: Parents shouldn't have to finance their children's educations.
Para. 3–4: Examples of how other students responded when learning the author paid for her own education.
Para. 5–6: Specifics of how much the author worked to pay for school.
Para. 7: The author takes a moment to brag about her achievement.
Para. 8–12: Comparison between the author and a sorority girl who had much more free time but still received lower grades.
Para. 13–14: A reiteration of how much the author dislikes hearing how parents ought to finance their children's college education, with an acknowledgment that she does not intend to pay for her own daughter's college education.
Para. 15–17: A refutation of potential counterarguments, with the author conceding that putting herself though school was hard and admitting she would have accepted "free college money" if it had been offered; however, she is proud that she finished college on her own, and believes that it has made her financially stable.
Para. 18: Conclusion: Kids might just thank their parents for making them pay their own tuition.

The benefit of reverse outlining is that it forces you to understand the article. You can't summarize another writer's main points unless you can identify them. What you end up with is a handy synopsis of your assigned reading—a sure way to save time when you need to go back and respond to the article in an essay.

PARAPHRASE

Another common way of digesting an author's ideas is through paraphrase. To **paraphrase** is to rephrase something said or written by someone else in your own words. While you *can* use the writer's own language in a paraphrase, you'll only want to use a word or short phrase, and you'll need to put it in quotation marks.

Let's try it with the second paragraph, which reads:

> Don't get me wrong. I realize that there are people out there who pay their own tuition. I know that some cannot put themselves through school because of disabilities or extenuating circumstances. But I have to say: the notion that parents must finance their children's education is ridiculous.

Again, this isn't a test; it's an opportunity to practice a skill—try to refrain from looking ahead. Use your own words, and assume this is the first time your reader is hearing the paraphrase, so identify the author and the title of her essay:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

An early version of a paraphrase might look something like this:

> In her essay, "Pay Your Own Way (Then Thank Mom)," Audrey Rock-Richardson admits there are people out there who cover their own tuition. She also realizes certain students cannot put themselves through college because of disabilities or extenuating circumstances. Overall, Rock-Richardson thinks the idea of parents having to pay for their kids' education is ridiculous.

However, that's a little too close to the original, in terms of both sentence structure and word choice. If the passage appeared in your essay, technically your instructor could cite you for **plagiarism**, passing off someone else's work as your own, even though you weren't trying to steal the material.

We'll discuss plagiarism more in Chapter 9 and in Appendix II, but it's worth noting here that credit must be given for every direct quotation. Even though this version acknowledges its source, the lack of quotation marks means the writer "borrowed" that material from someone else without giving him or her due credit. The underlined passages show where this paraphrase inadvertently uses Rock-Richardson's own language:

> In her essay, "Pay Your Own Way (Then Thank Mom)," Audrey Rock-Richardson admits there are people out there who cover their own tuition. She also realizes certain students cannot put themselves through college because of disabilities or extenuating circumstances. Overall, Rock-Richardson thinks the idea of parents having to pay for their kids' education is ridiculous.

Let's try again:

> In her essay, "Pay Your Own Way (Then Thank Mom)," Audrey Rock-Richardson acknowledges not everyone can cover the expenses of higher education. She is sympathetic to disabled students and those with "extenuating circumstances." However, she completely rejects the idea that parents should be responsible for funding their children's time in college.

This is much better, accurately representing Rock-Richardson's ideas in words that are almost entirely our own.

As you transition from reading to writing, and back again, you'll find that paraphrasing has several other advantages. It allows you to refer directly to the work you're discussing without over-quoting the author. Moreover, if the reading you're referring to contains material that is valuable to your argument but is poorly or carelessly worded, a paraphrase allows you to acknowledge your source while giving the author's words some much-needed polishing.

QUOTATIONS

Strong quotations can be the highlight of an academic essay, and we'll talk extensively about quoting, one of the three important methods of extracting material from a reading, in Chapter 7. However, when you're trying to understand the gist of a reading, summary and paraphrase are generally far more useful. In fact, focusing too much on the proper formatting for a quotation can be distracting. Therefore, for now, we'll just mention a few basics.

When you quote from a source, you must:

- use the source's *exact* words;
- place quotation marks around the quotation;
- indicate the source of the quotation.

For example, a quotation from a book on first-generation college students might look like this:

> In their book *First-Generation College Students: Understanding and Improving the Experience from Recruitment to Commencement*, Lee Ward, Michael J. Siegel, and Zebulun Davenport argue that "any amount of college education received by the parents of first-generation students is an important factor in how they view and experience college" (5).

The material inside the quotation marks represents what the authors actually wrote, word for word. While the **signal phrase** indicating the book's authors and title is a bit cumbersome, it's useful for readers to know right from the start the source of the quotation. (The parenthetical page number at the end is an example of MLA style documentation; it also requires an end citation in a Works Cited page, all of which we'll cover in Appendix II.)

Questions and Suggestions FOR You

1. Go back and reread "Pay Your Own Way (Then Thank Mom)." When you're finished, describe your reading process. Did you read straight through without stopping? Did you pause to look up any words? Did you find yourself gazing off at times to digest the content and compare it to your own experience? When were you most and least engaged in the essay?
2. Talking about your reading assignment after you've finished it is important. Find someone willing to listen to you for a few minutes and discuss this chapter's content. Describe the encounter. Did your listener ask any questions or make any comments that caused you to think differently about the chapter?
3. Summarize the main points of this chapter in a sentence or two. Remember to use your own words and be accurate and objective.
4. Choose a short paragraph from this chapter and paraphrase it. Use your own words whenever possible, and use quotation marks if you borrow any language.
5. Annotate one page of this chapter. Make comments or ask questions in the margins, and circle or underline significant words, phrases or sentences. Use lines and arrows to connect important passages.
6. Read another article, perhaps one assigned by your instructor, which uses supporting evidence from outside the author's own personal experience. Annotate and summarize the article, making sure to identify which material is written by the author and which is supporting

evidence written by someone else. When do the "secondary sources" effectively buttress the author's claims? At what points are personal opinion and experience more useful in making the argument?

7. Look at your syllabus for this class and skim over your assigned readings. Which assignments look good? Not-so-good? Why?
8. How do your readings for this class compare with your readings for the other classes you are taking this term? Are the assignments for this class longer or shorter? More difficult or less? Are there any possible connections between the subject matter in your writing class and in your other classes?
9. The Questions and Suggestions in Chapter 1 asked about your history as a writer. Compose a similar response based on your history as a reader. Begin with the first time you can remember reading words on paper or a computer screen and go all the way to the present. Questions 10–13 might be incorporated into this narrative, or your instructor may ask you to answer them separately.
10. What's the most important thing you've ever read and why?
11. What are your biggest challenges as a reader? What are your strongest biases? If English is not your native language, what difficulties have you faced when reading another language?
12. What issues are most likely to interfere with your success as a reader this term? Make a list, and then brainstorm a possible solution for each potential problem.
13. List all the places where you read regularly, and identify the locations you think will be most conducive to the academic reading you'll be doing in this class.

Questions and Suggestions FROM You

List three questions you still have after reading this section. Start by reviewing the chapter. If that method doesn't inspire three questions, think about the overall topic of reading for college. What don't you know about academic reading that you would really like to know?

1. _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. _____

3. _____

Describe one activity related to academic reading *not mentioned in this chapter* that you think would be helpful to do in class. Again, any successful activity in any course you've ever taken might serve as a model.