

## 6 Research Papers in the Humanities

The term paper, or the library research paper, is a standard assignment of liberal arts courses. It is liberating in the sense that more than most assignments in the classroom, it allows you considerable flexibility in choosing your topic or your approach to your topic. You take the responsibility for more decisions in writing a term paper. At the same time it calls for a sophisticated response on your part, for it is bound by quite strict conventions and requires you to bring together many academic skills, including: bibliographical and library research; careful note taking; organizing and synthesizing data and opinion; developing and arguing a thesis consistent with your evidence; and writing a clear, cohesive, and persuasive paper. In the research paper you are expected to become familiar in depth with some problem related to the course and to form your own views of that problem. As such, the term paper marks a rite of passage in many humanities courses, for you are being asked to perform, in microcosm, the tasks that scholars in the field engage in to produce articles in professional journals.

The assignment of a term paper is based on the reasonable and widely held assumption that a discipline is best introduced at two levels. At one level, you need to get a feel for the field, to find what kinds of problems it deals with and what methods it uses. This wide view of the field is represented by the reading assignments in the class. The other level is the pursuit of some narrow problem in depth, and it is this pursuit that the assignment of a research paper is designed to accomplish. It is not an empty exercise.

Term papers in the humanities are distinct from other papers by virtue of three important characteristics. The first is that they require research, but it is not easy to explain just what research in the humanities involves. To many, the term "research" evokes images of a white-coated scientist manipulating liquids in tubes at a laboratory bench. The analogous image for a researcher in the humanities is less clear cut, perhaps a person reading and taking notes in a dusty library corner. What makes this image less definitive is that the person might well be a scientist reviewing the

literature on some topic, so although scientists have an image to themselves, researchers in the humanities do not.

To get a handle on what makes research in the humanities distinctive, you must first get rid of the common view that papers fall into just two classes: research papers and opinion papers. Students often assume that they are supposed to write about fact in their science classes and opinions in their humanities classes. If everybody has a right to his own opinion in the humanities, what is the point of research? The answer is that between facts and opinions there is a realm of *reasoned* beliefs, conclusions, claims, and interpretations which, although not just a matter of fact, are still disputable and capable of rational assessment. You do indeed have a right to believe what you want, but you have no right to expect others to believe it unless you can back it up in some way.

The answer to the question "When did Charles II reign in England?" is not an opinion; it is a fact. The answer to the question "In what ways was Charles II's foreign policy as king of England affected by his experiences while in exile?" is also not an opinion—at least not in the way that many students define the word. When students ask, "Should I give my opinion?" they usually are asking whether they should express their own preference on the matter. A proper answer to the question about Charles II's foreign policy is not an issue of personal inclination. A proper answer should be based on a reasoned interpretation of a set of events and circumstances, such as what Charles II thought before and during the time he became king, his experiences on the Continent, the influence on him of the king of France, and so on. You may feel one way or another about these events and circumstances, and that preference may affect your interpretation, but in a history class you are obligated to back up your interpretation with the kind of evidence that historians will accept. They will not accept as a decisive answer, for example, what Charles II said about his own foreign policy. But historians may disagree on what the answer is, not because it is a mere matter of taste but because the range of facts to be considered in forging an answer is so great. Nor is a disagreement among historians on the subject just a matter of knowledge, of one knowing more about the period than another. The facts known equally to both historians may be open to several equally plausible interpretations. In such a case, there are certainly answers that are plainly wrong—inconsistent with the facts—but several answers that are *reasonable*, worthy of belief.

This example, drawn from history, is typical of the kinds of problems dealt with in the humanities. When doing research on a topic, you have a responsibility to find out what kinds of evidence are acceptable to the discipline, that is, what counts as a plausible answer, and also to find out the range of disagreement that exists in the discipline on this topic. Both require reading other scholars, but not for the purpose of eliciting the right answer. You are seeking a plausible answer, a respectable answer. If in a philosophy class you decide to write on whether animals have

rights, you need to read philosophers to find out what is at stake in giving a negative or positive answer to the question. You must discover what else you are committed to if you say animals do have rights. Once you find it out, you decide whether you are prepared to accept the commitment. For example, you need to find out whether extending rights to animals commits you intellectually to vegetarianism, to the abolition of hunting, or to the abolition of zoos. It is the purpose of the discipline of philosophy to examine these kinds of connections, and to engage in research on the topic is to discover the kinds of considerations philosophers find persuasive in establishing these connections.

In doing a research paper, then, you are attempting to discover what the nature of evidence is in the discipline and also to follow your question to the answers that the discipline finds plausible.

Because the term paper is built on thorough, careful research, a second important characteristic is that it requires more extensive preparation time than most other pieces of writing you will be asked to do in college. The word “term” paper itself conveys time; it takes time to complete a major research project. So you should begin compiling a bibliography and reading in the general area of your topic soon after you receive the assignment. Even if you do not yet have a definite topic, reading in the area from which you might select a topic will provide context and will help you to define a specific area for your paper. Many research papers fail ultimately because the writer has not taken the time to familiarize himself with the larger area in which his topic is embedded. No amount of last-minute heroics can save a paper if insufficient research is the difficulty.

The third characteristic of research papers is that they are governed by rules and conventions that need to be learned. This kind of paper, above all, follows prescribed forms. Some are standard universal conventions, such as the necessity to document and give a bibliography. Other conventions vary from field to field, for example, forms of documentation (chapter 5) and the use of direct quotations in the body of the paper. Before writing your draft you should become familiar with the conventions of the discipline and the specific preferences of your instructor.

## Getting started

To illustrate strategies for writing a term paper in the humanities we have chosen a paper on a literary work—*Hard Times*, by Charles Dickens—for two reasons. First, it is an example where there is a distinction between the primary text, the novel, and secondary sources, books and articles on the novel. Not all humanities projects have this distinction. If your topic were, for example, the implications of a principle of equality of opportunity for women, you would not have a primary text on which to work. But many projects do involve a primary text. When your project does, the first step in getting started is always to read the primary text; in this

case, read *Hard Times*. Our second purpose in choosing this example is to illustrate the differences between doing a literary analysis of a text (chapter 7), where the emphasis is on what you see in the text, and a research paper on a text, where you are expected to test your impressions and add to them by reviewing what others have seen.

It should be emphasized that research on a novel does not replace your close and critical reading of it as if for a literary analysis. It is to your advantage in doing research to have already formed some ideas of what you might say about it. Thus, the strategy of the first step is the same as that recommended in chapter 7 for a literary analysis: as you read, take notes on features of the novel that strike you as interesting or important. If there are passages you think might be candidates for quotation in your paper, write them out in full. Note down striking images, paraphrase themes, notice unusual words or combinations of words, and don't forget to record stray thoughts as they occur to you. Where the passage seems too long for full quotation, you should still note its existence so you can retrieve it if you decide to use it. Thus, Dickens's description of Coketown, the dreary industrial town in which the novel is set, runs half a page. Figure 6.1 shows how your notecard might read.

It is advisable to give a card to each separate entry, for when you are finished you will want to go over them and put them into categories if you can. You will then see connections you had not previously seen.

It is a general principle of efficient research that you should narrow your topic. But don't be too eager to limit your thinking in this first stage of reading your primary text. Even if halfway through your reading you have found what you think may be your thesis, or have generated a controlling question, you still have to read the whole text, so there is little advantage in choosing subsequently only those passages that relate to your question. At this stage you are getting ideas and information that may only later in your project turn out to be significant. You should notice as much as you can. It is true that at this stage of the research, as at any stage, you must also be selective in the notes you take—otherwise you would transcribe the whole novel word for word. But you are relatively less selective at this stage than at any later stage.

So while you are still reading, stay alert to many ideas that could serve as a thesis. When you have finished reading the text, you can then select among the various possible theses. Whatever thesis you choose, whatever aspect of the novel you wish to write about, you will still have to read some general material on *Hard Times* in order to put your idea into context. So the logical next step is to find books and articles that locate the novel in an historical framework. Where you will go from there, to more specific material, will depend on your narrowing the focus for your search. You must now be very selective in the material for which you search.

After you have read and taken notes on the novel and after you have read some general material on *Hard Times*, you should work out a

Description of Coketown: (pp. 30-31)

... "unnatural red and black like the painted face of a savage... chimneys, out of which interminable serpents of smoke trailed themselves forever and ever, and never got uncoiled... black canal... a river that ran purple with ill-smelling dye... You saw nothing in Coketown but what was severely workful."

FIGURE 6.1  
Notecard with  
quotation from *Hard  
Times*.

controlling question for your paper. This is a question to which the paper will be an answer. You may have generated a number of possible questions as you read the novel and as you conducted your preliminary research, but now is the time to refine the question. The purpose of refining such a question is twofold. First, it forces you to decide what you already have discovered and to make some initial sense of it, thereby calling a halt to a useless accumulation of facts. The second purpose is to provide you with a principle of selection for the rest of the material you will read.

Given these two purposes, you have three criteria for a good controlling question:

- 1 The question must be sufficiently narrowing to make some of the published material on *Hard Times* irrelevant to your purpose. (Otherwise, it will not be a principle of selection.)
- 2 It must require research for its answer.
- 3 It must be realistic; that is, you must be capable of doing it with the information and time you have available.

Although it is possible that a question you ask of *Hard Times* might be too narrow to be useful, problems arise more commonly from not having any such question or from having one that is too general. (The question

"When was *Hard Times* published?" is too narrow, although to ask of a Platonic dialogue when it was written would not be too narrow, for it is an issue of dispute among scholars and leads you to important questions of historical scholarship.) A controlling question is to research papers somewhat as a hypothesis is to an experiment. For a scientist, a hypothesis dictates which facts are to count and serves as a selecting device. The controlling question is less restrictive than a hypothesis, though, for the hypothesis must also be empirically testable in a carefully defined way. In a broad sense, a controlling question must be testable, but the concept of testability in the humanities means that some available facts or accessible facts will make sense of one answer.

Here are some examples:

*Fails criteria*

- 1 Is *Hard Times* a successful novel?
- 2 What does Mr. Gradgrind do when he discovers his son is a thief?
- 3 To what extent is *Hard Times* representative of Victorian literature?

*Satisfies criteria*

- 4 What was the influence of the Preston Strike on the writing of *Hard Times*?
- 5 What was the contemporary reception of *Hard Times*?
- 6 Is the Gradgrind School a fair representation of utilitarian educational theories?

Question (1) fails the first test, for no material published on *Hard Times* can be irrelevant to it. Question (2) fails the second test, for it can be answered without doing more than reading the novel itself. It is too narrow a question. Question (3) fails the third test, for unless you are steeped in Victorian literature you are unlikely to have sufficient background knowledge of the period to deal with the question within one semester. Questions (4), (5), and (6) are all testable controlling questions because they provide a basis for selection of research materials, they require you to do research outside the novel itself, and they are plausible questions for an undergraduate to pursue within one semester.

To state a controlling question about Dickens is not the same as stating a topic. Your interest may be piqued by the status of women in the novel, but although naming the topic does limit what you need to read, you need to pose a controlling question before you can formulate research plans. You can turn a topic statement into a controlling question trivially, of course: "I intend to study the status of women in *Hard Times*" can be transformed into the question "What views of women are to be found in *Hard Times*?" When topics are merely rephrased as questions, the paper becomes a totally descriptive paper.

A good controlling question is fruitful to the extent that it suggests further, more specific questions which can be handled separately. Sometimes these further questions are suggested by key words in the controlling question ("Preston Strike"; "utilitarian"). But the more specific questions you can extract from the larger controlling question, the more fruitful the question. Thus, "What do the roles played by Louisa, Sissy, and Mrs. Sparsit show of Dickens's views of women?" leads you to three more specific questions about the role of each of these three characters as well as other more specific questions about Dickens's treatment of male characters: Are they contrasting or comparable? The question "What was the influence of the Preston Strike on the writing of *Hard Times*?" suggests further questions, such as: What are the dates of each? Is there any evidence that Dickens was aware of the Preston Strike? Is the evidence reliable? How does the account of the labor union in *Hard Times* compare with the facts of the Preston Strike? By contrast, the topic "industrialism" suggests less specific subareas than the controlling question: What were Dickens's views of industrialism? What was the contemporary state of industrial relations?

How do you generate a controlling question? By engaging in the strategies recommended in chapter 2 for generating ideas. Those strategies are designed to help you see what you already know. The controlling question builds on what you know to indicate what you need to find out. We will illustrate how some of those strategies might apply.

**Classify your notes** Put them in separate piles. There will usually be an obvious basis for the initial classification for most of them (if you have kept them short). In an example such as ours, you should have notes relating to specific characters of the novel, descriptions of the setting, philosophical asides, imagery, internal cross-references, author's voice, and plot developments. In addition, you should have notes of your own thoughts as you read, some of which will relate to the categories mentioned above. Having separated your notes, analyze them. Is there a character on whom you have notes starting very late in the book? Why? Did you miss something? Or is it that the character plays a significant role only later in the novel? If so why? What characters resemble one another? Which contrast with others? Do you notice changes in the views of the characters over the span of the novel? Why? Look for the use of imagery (machines, smoke). Classify by theme (industrialism, education). Who tells the story? What is the function of the narrator?

Some other categories for classifying your notes should now be apparent to you, for the choices you made in selecting material on which to take notes is in effect the operation of a classification scheme of some kind, some general notion, perhaps implicit, of what was important and not. In a sense, the relationships that turn up when you classify in this first way are the discoveries you have made in your readings without being



aware of them. (For example, you might find that all the comments made about Louisa are exactly the opposite of those made about Sissy. If so, are they mirror images of one another?)

There is more to be had from this strategy, for many of your notes will fit in several classifications. Force yourself to reclassify. This reclassification will unpack more information of a less obvious kind. Although you must dig for it, the result will be even more valuable in generating ideas for the paper. All disciplines relish surprise, and surprise comes from the non-obvious. Suppose you have a pile of notes for two characters, Bounderby and Gradgrind. It is easy to see that these two fit together in a category: they both represent the manufacturing class of Coketown, the local well-to-do. Less obvious is a classification under which fall both Blackpool (the honest weaver repudiated by all sides) and Thomas Gradgrind (born to advantage, the son of a wealthy factory owner). You ask yourself whether there is a way to complete the sentence, "Thomas and Stephen are the same in that they are both. . . ." You might decide they are both victims, or that they stand, in different ways, for the moral bankruptcy of the educational theories of Thomas's father. You might not use this similarity in your paper, but other more important relationships may be uncovered by the same method of reclassification.

One of the ways you generate ideas about a topic is by breaking it up into elements, by analyzing it. The strategy of reclassification is a way to do this. By finding difficult bases of classification you are slicing the novel up in different ways. The author chooses one basis of classification by arranging the novel in one order. You must devise other ways to slice it. This strategy of reclassification also applies to nonliterary works. If the author has chosen a narrative arrangement, then to analyze it you need to choose another way of seeing the book. Abstract the role of one character or trace the development of one relationship or of one idea. If a book of history is arranged chronologically, then you test your understanding of the book and reveal new relationships by reorganizing it for yourself. You might take out all the comments about economics, or about politics, or about religion, or about military affairs. In this way you make the material your own.

Figure 6.2 shows how you can come to see more by forcing yourself to reclassify. Suppose you find in your notes (figure 6.2) four quotations, which you have duly annotated with page number, source, context, and, possibly, brief interpretation. You would naturally have put (1) and (2) together, as indicated by the notation "imagery" on the two cards. You would also have initially placed (3) and (4) in the pile of notes relating to Louisa. But at some later point you should look systematically in the other cards to find imagery you might have missed, other notes that might be classified with (1) and (2). Then you are prepared to see as imagery Louisa's self-descriptions: "dried out" and a garden that has never bloomed (for lack of water?). And this in turn might lead you to look for other examples of these images.



①

"little vessels... ready to have imperial gallons of facts poured into them until they were full to the brim"

HT p. 12. Narrator's voice describing teacher's view of students. (Imagery)

②

"little pitchers"

HT p. 13. (Narrator's voice describing teacher's view of students. Imagery - see "vessels")

③

"Her remembrances of home and childhood were remembrances of the drying up of every spring and fountain in her young heart as it gushed out of her"

HT p. 197. Louisa's thoughts of herself.

④

"Where are the graces of my soul? Where are the sentiments of my heart?... What have you done, oh, Father, what have you done with the garden that should have bloomed once, in this great wilderness here."

HT p. 215. Louisa to father in confrontation scene.

FIGURE 6.2  
(on facing page)  
*Notecards that can be  
organized to reveal  
patterns.*

As a beginner in the study of a discipline—and every student in an introductory course is to some extent a beginner—you may need to check your conception of what the discipline regards as important and relevant. An example of a wrong approach to a term paper in literature would be a straight narration of the events of Dickens's life, with no connections drawn between his life experiences and the writing of his novels. If you suspect you are picking out the wrong features of the primary text, or if you think your approach may be inappropriate, then you need to consult some basic library sources. (See chapter 4.)

For our example you would need to know the implications of considering *Hard Times* as a novel. What sort of comment or question can you appropriately make about a novel, either in describing it or evaluating it? For example, it is appropriate for a literary critic to ask why Louisa Gradgrind is a woman and not a man. That question would be a silly one for a psychologist or sociologist to pose about a real-life situation, but the question is proper for a literary critic, who is concerned with *Hard Times* as a work of fiction, something that Dickens made up to fulfill certain purposes. Louisa is after all a fictional character who is female because Dickens decided that she would be female. To understand the concept of the novel as a fictional world, you need to do some research on the elements of the novel.

To learn about the elements of the novel, you would follow the strategy of library search recommended in the last chapter. Start with the encyclopedia. If you follow the references to entries on Dickens in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, you will find one of the important references to him embedded in the analytical portion of an entry on "The Novel," specifically, in the subsection on the novel as propaganda. Examine the structure of the whole entry. Here is the portion of the outline in which the material on Dickens appears:

#### Elements of the Novel

- Plot
- Character
- Scene, or setting
- Narrative method and point of view
- Scope, or dimension
- Myth, symbolism, significance

#### Uses of the Novel

- As an expression of an interpretation of life
- As entertainment or escape
- As propaganda
- As reportage
- As an agent of change in the language and thought of a culture
- As an expression of the spirit of its age
- As a creator of life styles and an arbiter of taste<sup>1</sup>

1 "The Novel," *New Encyclopaedia Britannica: Macropaedia*, 1980 ed.

These are the most basic categories by which novels are analyzed. You might formulate a controlling question in their terms, a question *about* plot, narrative method, etc.

You can also get basic categories from more advanced bibliographies that annotate their references. For example, the table of contents of a bibliography of *Victorian Fiction* gives the following list for the chapter on Dickens:

<i>Studies of Special Aspects</i>	64
Characterization	65
Plot and Narration	67
Imagery and Symbolism	68
Style and Language	70
Comedy, Humor, Satire	71
Illustrations	72
Serialization	75
Dickens and Society	76
London	77
Industrialism	78
Women	79
Religion	80
Literary Predecessors, Contemporaries, and Successors	81
Notable Critics Criticized <sup>2</sup>	84

And looking further into the chapter on Dickens, you find a fully annotated bibliography that illuminates the significant topics and the controversies. Here is an example of the beginning of a paragraph from the bibliographical essay on Dickens:

Two particularly good essays on the rhetoric of the novel have appeared, David Lodge's in his *Language of Fiction* (1966) and Robert Green's "Hard Times: The Style of a Sermon" (TSL, 1970). The tactics of its opening page are analyzed by Stanley Tick (VN, 1974). "Fancy," a theme of these essays, is critically assessed in another fine essay, David Sonstroem's (PMLA, 1969), and the imagery in several essays—J. Miriam Benn's (DSA, 1970), Mary Rose Sullivan's (VN, 1970), and most substantially in George Bornstein's (NCF, 1971). Anny Sadrin's "The Perversion of Desire" is a study of. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Reference materials can give you productive ideas for developing your paper, but do not depend exclusively on published lists. Try on your own

2 Reprinted by permission of the Modern Language Association of America from George H. Ford, ed., *Victorian Fiction: A Second Guide to Research*. Copyright © 1978 by the Modern Language Association of America.

3 Ford, *Victorian Fiction*, p. 100. Reprinted by permission.

to make sense of your notes. If you take your categories from a list given to you, the process of classification becomes a mechanical filling of a grid instead of the creative, interpretative process of discovery it can be.

**Brainstorming** You can brainstorm from almost any of your notecards, drawing out the implications of any notes you have written to yourself or free-associating on names (Dickens provides particularly good material for this associative thinking: "Coketown," "Boulderby," "Gradgrind"), or elaborating upon the relationships you uncover by the previous strategy of classifying.

Suppose you have noted a quotation from the novel, a description of the circus performers (figure 6.3), and added a note to yourself, "Doesn't this patronize them?" Studying the quotation, you begin to brainstorm—see figure 6.4.

Or you can consider your own associations with the phrase "hard times," but not merely your private associations. Perhaps you can draw on your knowledge of other historical periods when times were hard. Your brainstorming might then produce the notes in figure 6.5.

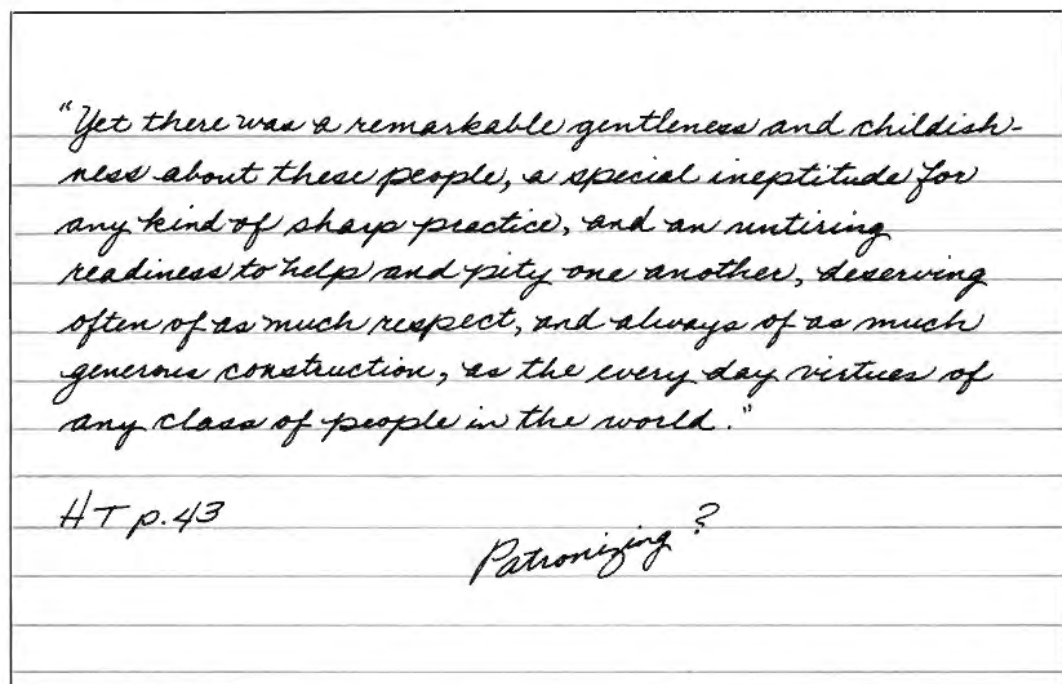


FIGURE 6.3  
Notecard with your  
comment.

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Why patronizing? Good to be gentle and ready to help one another. But is that supposed to go with being childish and inept? Is he saying only those who are childish and inept are capable of gentleness and generosity? As circus people they are outside society. They are also uneducated. Is he saying education, because it eliminated childishness, also eliminated gentleness and generosity? But Mr. Gradgrind, in his own way, is said to be generous and kind, and it is he who stands for the educational system. Or is it that his generosity does not emerge clearly until he has come to see how in Bitzer the educational system has eliminated finer emotions. Gradgrind early in the novel insists that everything can be weighed and measured in a utilitarian calculus. Calculus — calculating. That is just what Bitzer is. He is a calculator — ends up in the local bank dealing with money — and he is also calculating. He calculates his own interest and manipulates people, including his own mentor, Gradgrind, for his own interest. And he is supposed to be the successful student! But the utilitarians were supposed to be social reformers. Surely they did not intend the products of their education to turn out like Bitzer. Louisa once makes the mistake in the novel of saying, "I wonder." She is reprimanded by her father — "Never wonder." Could the utilitarians have regarded wonder as undesirable?

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FIGURE 6.4  
(on facing page)  
Brainstorming on a  
passage from *Hard  
Times*.

A useful variant of brainstorming is the development of an analogy. In addition to helping you develop ideas, if you take a current reference you know something about, you may find the analogy will open fresh areas for you and allow you to say something original about the novel. If you have read some general accounts of *Hard Times*, you have discovered that it was published in segments in a journal called *Household Words*. You may also have noticed the references in the novel to industrial safety and found out in your general reading about the context of the novel that

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*Hard Times. Like the Great Depression. But this is supposed to be the middle of the Industrial Revolution. New wealth being created. New, more efficient manufacturing machines. So why hard times? Certainly the lives of the working people seem pretty bleak. But so do the lives of the owning class. Bounderby seems self-satisfied. But is he happy? We never see him enjoying himself. How can he enjoy himself without Fancy? So are we supposed to feel sorry for him too? His intentions are not evil. Neither are Gradgrind's. Muddle. That comes up several times. Stephen Blackpool thinks the problems come from muddle rather than malevolence. Of course this may be because he is simple minded and incapable of thinking ill of people. But does Dickens think of it as muddle? Are they all victims? Is this why Dickens is regarded as a social reformer and not a revolutionary?*

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FIGURE 6.5  
Brainstorming on your  
associations with the  
title, *Hard Times*.

safety was a major issue of the day. So we have a connection: Dickens—journalist—industrial safety. Whom do you know living now who is also a crusader for industrial safety? Ralph Nader comes to mind. So take what you know of Ralph Nader and spin out the analogy: Dickens is like Ralph Nader in that they both. . . . Ralph Nader has created an organization that continually presses for consumer safety. Did Dickens? Ralph Nader engages in the political process, testifying before Congress and making speeches on behalf of candidates. Did Dickens? Nader is concerned not only with the safety of workers in the workplace but also with the safety of the products they make. Was Dickens? These questions will lead you to inquire into the political context in which *Hard Times* was written. The analogy is not perfect, at least in the sense that Nader is not a novelist. Do you know any current novelist who has done journalistic projects? Norman Mailer has. So has Truman Capote. These may be fruitful models for thinking about the journalist-novelist Dickens.

Here is another example of using an analogy to generate ideas: It is a basic tenet of the Gradgrind school that the reason should be educated "without stooping to the cultivation of the sentiments and affections." Reason, for Gradgrind, excludes the emotions. If you were a viewer of *Star Trek*, Mr. Spock, the Vulcan, should come to mind. He was incapable of feeling emotions. Contrast Bitzer, the successful product of Gradgrindism, with Mr. Spock. Mr. Spock could not feel, but he knew right and wrong; he was never dishonest; he knew the meaning of loyalty. Can the failure of Bitzer as a moral person then be explained on the basis of an undeveloped emotional capacity? Would Mr. Spock not be the perfect embodiment of the Gradgrind school?

These analogies are not intended necessarily to appear in the final paper. They are intended to help you explode the topic into various components which can be pursued further.

On the basis of these techniques you should now be in a position to write down a controlling question that will lead you to further material in the library. If you were interested in Dickens considered as a journalist-novelist-social reformer, then you might form the following question: "To what extent does *Hard Times* reflect the concerns of the social reformers of the day?" Then, in your library search, a title like "*Hard Times: The News and the Novel*" (by Joseph Butwin) will signify a relevant article, as will "Dickens and the Factories" (by Patrick Brantlinger) or "*Hard Times and the Factory Controversy*" (by K. J. Fielding and Anne Smith). If you decide to pursue the educational theme of *Hard Times*, then "The Gradgrind School: Political Economy in the Classroom" (by Robin Gilmour) will strike you as relevant, and if the Fact versus Fancy aspect of Gradgrind's educational system interests you, "Dickens and the Passions" by Barbara Hardy will be relevant. You then follow up the internal references of the articles you choose to read. For whatever controlling question you select, you will now be searching not so much for *the* answer to it but for the varieties of answers and for the kind of evidence presented for each.



## Getting started on nonliterary topics

In this section so far we have been discussing a research assignment that involves a primary text. We have assumed that the generation of ideas becomes systematic at the point when you have read the text and have a pile of notecards on which to work. To illustrate the case where you have no primary text and where, nonetheless, you are expected to do research, we have chosen a different discipline and a different topic. Suppose you are assigned, or you choose, the topic "the rights of animals," for a philosophy class. Now you might very well have strong views on animals, but if you have spent any time in a philosophy class you will have come to realize that philosophers regard the expression of your views as mere biographical facts about you. When you are assigned a topic such as animal rights, you are expected to take a position on the topic and give reasons for your position. What you need to find out is what positions are possible and what counts as a reason for or against those positions according to the conventions of philosophy.

First consult a general encyclopedia and a specialized encyclopedia, in this case *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. The two key words in the statement of the topic are "rights" and "animals." You can regard the topic as the "rights" subtopic of the topic "animals," in which case you begin with animals. Or you can regard the topic as the "animals" subtopic of the topic "rights," and begin with rights. In following this route you find some material on the topic of rights, but with little application to animals; and you find an enormous amount of material on animals, but with little application to the treatment of animals. This situation is not unusual for a topic that has become widely discussed only relatively recently as a whole subject category to itself. For topics like this one, to get bibliographies you have to go to very recent sources, of which the most up to date are periodical indexes. In this case you consult *The Philosopher's Index*, and there under "animals" you find information on recent essays published on the subject. So this index is the logical starting point for your research.

Ordinarily you use an index only to get references to other material to read, and you can judge what to select only by the titles. Many indexes, though, do more than list titles. They also provide you with abstracts of many of the journal articles listed. These abstracts should be used to get an overview of what the controversies are, of what the positions are, and of who is on each side. Here are some examples of abstracts from *The Philosopher's Index*:

**BURCH, Robert W.** Animals, Rights, And Claims. *Sw J Phil* 8,53-59 Sum 77.

Animals do not have rights because they lack the proper characteristics of rights-bearers, videlicet moral agency and a capacity to exert a moral self-defense. These characteristics are necessary in rights-possessors owing to the nature of rights as special moral "commodities." Rights are claims with a kind of first-person orientation; their point is to provide for an agent's self-defense from the moral point of view, consequently for personal dignity.

**SINGER, Peter.** The Fable Of The Fox And The Unliberated Animals. *Ethics* 88,119–125 Ja 78.

Michael Fox has attempted to refute the arguments for the equality of animals in my book, *Animal Liberation*. Unfortunately, he mistakenly interprets the argument as one based on rights and an absolute prohibition on killing. This article corrects the interpretation and replies to the few remaining criticisms.

**REGAN, Thomas and Jamieson, Dale.** Animal Rights: A Reply To Frey's "Animal Rights". *Analysis* 38,32–36 Ja 78.

In his paper, "Animal Rights" (*Analysis* 37.4), R G Frey claims to refute "the most important argument" for the view that animals have rights. We show that no prominent defender of the rights of animals has argued, or should argue, in the way that Frey suggests. Furthermore, we show that there is a plausible argument for the view that animals have rights that is left undiscussed by Frey.

**FOX, Michael.** Animal Suffering And Rights. *Ethics* 88,134–138 Ja 78.

In this reply, I answer some of the criticisms of my article "Animal Liberation: A Critique" (*Ethics*, January 1978) made by Peter Singer and Tom Regan. Several ways in which they have misconstrued my position are discussed, as well as their charges that I have misrepresented theirs. My chief purpose here is to clarify and reaffirm, in most essential respects, my characterization of them as advocates of a doctrine of animal rights. I also reconsider the issue of the qualitative and quantitative equivalence of human and animal suffering, the notion of membership in a moral community, and the role of the capacity to enjoy and suffer in the ascription of moral rights.<sup>4</sup>

These abstracts are typical of how philosophers deal with ethical issues. Notice how argumentative they are. The Burch article gives a reason for denying animals have rights. The Singer article is a reply to another article, as is Regan's, and the Fox article is a response to a response. Reading these abstracts should give you a sense of where the controversies are and who represents the various positions.

The possible positions on whether animals have rights are limited: either they do or they do not, or else you might make some distinction that enables you to argue that some animals do and some animals don't, or that in one sense animals have rights and in another sense they do not. From examining some of the abstracts of the articles, you can make a list of the players on each side, dividing them into those who support animal rights and those who do not:

Proponents of  
animal rights

Regan    Haworth  
Singer    Feinberg  
Clark    Salt

Opponents of  
animal rights

Fox            Narveson  
Frey           Burch  
McCloskey

<sup>4</sup> *The Philosopher's Index*, 12, No. 2 (Summer 1978), pp. 68, 95, 91, 75. Quoted with permission from the Philosophy Documentation Center, Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio 43403.

You could do it in more detail by laying out the order of the controversy: first Singer's paper, then Fox's, response to Fox by Regan and Singer, and rejoinder yet again by Fox.

It is important to understand the order of the controversy, because philosophers are concerned with the logic of an individual's argument, not merely with his conclusion. Suppose philosopher A presents an argument in defense of granting animals rights. Philosopher B criticizes A, but usually the criticism goes not so much to A's conclusion as to A's argument. That is, very often B's criticism is that A's reasoning is mistaken, not that A's position is mistaken. Consequently, the fact that you can make a list of the philosophers on each side of an issue does not itself guarantee that these philosophers have argued their positions in the same way. You run the risk of ending up with a list of arguments on one side and another list on the other, with no way of comparing them. If you can find a series of replies, as in the entries above, you know the arguments of each will be directed at the other.

Once you have identified the adversaries, you read the material to discover in more detail what the arguments are. This further reading should lead to notes on another list: arguments in favor (and replies) and arguments against (and replies). Another useful list in moral questions is a list of principles defended by various authors. The ultimate goal of a research paper in philosophy of this kind is that you identify and display the alternatives and do some evaluation of them, that is, choose a side and give a reasoned argument for your side.

Now that you have determined the positions, you are ready to see where your own views fit into the picture. Use variants of the brainstorming and classification strategies described in this chapter and in chapter 2. After you record a number of your own ideas on animal rights, look for a principle that connects the items on your list. Thus, you might take a series of cases that involve the ethics of treatment of animals: animal experiments, hunting of animals, the use of animals for cosmetics or clothes, eating animals. You ask yourself what your attitude to each case is. Then look at kinds of animals—cattle, dogs, snakes, insects, birds, and so on—and ask yourself how you feel about each kind of animal. You now have two lists: one with your feelings about various animals and the other with your attitudes about ways of treating animals. Do you distinguish between scientific experiments performed on rats and those performed on puppies? If so, look for a principle that explains the distinction you make.

Earlier we suggested the use of analogy as a brainstorming strategy. In the case of the topic "animals and human beings," the analogy between them is part of the marrow of the issue: Are humans and animals sufficiently alike to justify extending rights to (some) animals? Or are they utterly unlike? Here the analogy is not employed to generate ideas; it can be the central issue of the paper on the topic.

The use of examples is another useful strategy that both allows you to introduce your own voice in the paper and is also a central philosophical technique. Given that disputes over ethical questions in philosophy are disputes about principles, these principles are assessed by inspecting what they have to say about a wide range of examples. In a sense, examples are to philosophy what empirical data are to science. But examples also clarify in philosophy, as well as provide a basis for evaluating the principles. For instance, if a possible principle led to the consequence that cats are as entitled to consideration as are retarded human beings, would you then reject the principle? There is opportunity for wide scope to your imagination in devising perceptive and convincing examples.

### Writing the first draft

You have reached the stage of first draft when you are ready to translate your ideas and thoughts and notes into connected discourse, with full sentences and complete organized paragraphs. The distinction between the research stage and the first-draft stage would be clear and tidy if one could characterize the first stage as one of finding out what you want to say and then the second stage as one of saying it. It is true that you should focus your attention in the early stages of your paper on discovering ideas, but many writers may find it difficult to continue their research beyond a certain point until they write down a tentative thesis. Most experienced writers give at least some thought to their potential readers as they think about this thesis. At any stage in the composing process, you may find yourself talking to the walls, to plants, to dogs, to typewriters, to the windows, or, if you are lucky, to a sympathetic roommate or friend. Sometimes in this internal conversation—either oral or written—you may hear an inspired turn of your own phrasing. Once in a while full sentences may come almost unbidden to your pen. Such sentences may even launch a flight of creative thought.

So the writing of a thesis sentence may precede the time when you actually sit down to write a first draft. On the other hand, you may begin a first draft with a thesis that you actually reject by the time you see what you have said in the draft as a whole. Many good writers do not really know what they want to say until they have written it out. Sometimes you find in writing that you cannot adequately support what you thought you wanted to say. You may even find the difficulties of writing out a full defense of your thesis reveal such weaknesses in it that you may switch to the other side entirely. It is possible, for example, that although you set out to attack a particular critic's interpretation of *Hard Times*, you may end up agreeing with him. Writing a first draft can be just as much a matter of discovering what you believe as is the research stage. In a most important sense, therefore, the first draft represents your testing for *yourself* whether your thesis "will write."

Transforming research notes into connected sentences and paragraphs is a matter of personal style. Some writers like to work from detailed outlines. They divide the thesis into a series of steps, and perhaps those steps into further steps, each step to represent a point to be made in one paragraph. The value of a detailed outline is that it keeps the overall structure of the paper fixed in your mind at each stage. The danger of an outline is similar to the danger of trying to get the first draft to read like a polished final version. You may come to regard the plan as fixed and final. Other writers like to work from a rough outline, where each point of the outline represents a major section of the paper. And other writers again prefer to forego plans (except perhaps in their head), writing out the thesis statement and then seeing how it develops.

You should experiment with these various strategies to find one with which you are most comfortable. Your purpose is to generate a series of paragraphs, and it does not matter just how you do it. In particular it does not matter in which order you do it. If you are working from an outline, there is no reason why you cannot begin with the last section or with a paragraph from the middle of the paper. In fact, since it always helps to get something down on paper, it may be a good strategy to begin with the paragraphs and points you feel most strongly about or the points you think will write most easily. Many writers find that writing one section—any section—of the paper helps them to develop new points.

You will find yourself with more information than you can use in the first draft, and the first draft generates more than you can use in the final paper. If a point does not fit, or if it is redundant, then even if it is a favorite of yours, you must be ruthless in taking it out. Record some of these extraneous ideas in your journal. Or make an appointment with your instructor to tell him about all the good ideas that you had to leave out.

In sum, almost anything goes in writing the first draft if it is successful in generating paragraphs.

You might use your notecards systematically for the purpose of generating paragraphs. Pick out a series of quotations that make different points. It does not matter where the quotations come from, whether from primary source material or from secondary sources. Then construct a paragraph around each quotation. The paragraph may be a commentary on the quotation, an elaboration of it, an objection to the opinion it contains, or an illustration of an important point. Then, once you have finished, consider what kinds of connections exist among the various paragraphs, whether they overlap or are coordinate to one another or subordinate. The strategy you will follow is exactly the strategy we outlined above for classifying notecards.

Suppose you have on a notecard the quotation shown in figure 6.6. By building a paragraph around the quotation, we mean that you write a paragraph expanding it in some way, describing its context or its con-

*"Some persons hold . . . that there is a wisdom of the Head, and that there is a wisdom of the Heart. I have not supposed so; but, as I have said, I mistrust myself now."*

*HT p. 222. Mr. Gradgrind to Louisa.*

FIGURE 6.6

tribution to the story, elaborating what it means for the novel (that is, what does it show?). It is possible that to get the writing going you might begin to narrate the context of the quotations, and then begin to draw some inferences from the material that you generate (figure 6.7).

Figure 6.8 is another example of a paragraph built around a quotation from a secondary source.

Another example inspired by some sentences you might have taken from a secondary source is shown in figure 6.9.

A second way to generate paragraphs is this: Suppose you choose to write about the Gradgrind school. Then there is an obvious list of people who illustrate the effects or lack of effects of an education such as this school offers. Some characters in the novel have been students (Bitzer, Thomas Gradgrind, Louisa, Sissy Jupe); some are teachers or officials (M'Choackumchild, Gradgrind). The other characters may also represent something about the Gradgrind school because they have developed outside its influence. Now it is possible for you simply to take each of these people and write a paragraph or more on each one, showing for each how the Gradgrind school functions or does not function.

But both of these strategies are adequate only for a first draft. By using these methods, you can generate the substance of many paragraphs that may appear in the final paper. Next you need to work on making the

**FIGURE 6.7**  
First draft generated  
from explanation of a  
passage in *Hard*  
*Times*.

The quote from *Hard Times*  
Note the short reference  
in parentheses. You  
should have the full  
reference on a  
bibliography card.

Immediately a narration  
of the context in which  
the statement appeared  
— who said it, to whom,  
when? This is the easiest  
way to begin to write  
about a quotation.

The effect on Mr.  
Gradgrind.

Your interpretation of  
the relationship of this  
passage to the wider  
theme of *Fact vs.*  
*Fancy*.

Interpretation of the  
effect on Mr. Gradgrind,  
with another quote from  
your note cards taken  
from earlier in the  
book but related to the  
issue in this paragraph.

"Some persons hold . . . that there is a wisdom of the Head, and that there is a wisdom of the Heart." (HT, p. 222) Louisa's father says this to Louisa the morning after Louisa confronts him with his failure to give her an education in happiness. Mr. Gradgrind is shattered by the discovery of her extreme unhappiness and begins to doubt the educational theory of which he had been so certain. He is forced to consider that his earlier declaration to Bounderby, "The reason is . . . the only faculty to which education should be addressed" (HT 27), is mistaken. There is also a person's emotional life (the Heart) which he has neglected in Louisa. The opposition between the "wisdom of the Head" and the "wisdom of the Heart" is another version of the opposition made so much of in the earlier parts of the book—*Fact (Head) vs. Fancy (Heart)*. He has failed his daughter's heart.

presentation sound less mechanical. No matter how hard the paper has been to write, you must work on making it easier to read.

## Revising

When you move to the revising stage it is true that you know what you want to say. The emphasis now shifts to how successfully you communicate it to another person. A writer owes an audience sentences that are crafted carefully, precisely, and clearly. Thus, it is at the stage of revision that you should be concerned with individual sentences, writing and rewriting them as often as is necessary to communicate your meaning as directly as you can. The lament "But what I meant was . . ." is a symptom of a failure of the revision stage. Just as much a failure of revision is a



Quote from your notes on a secondary source. Only brief reference necessary—you should have full reference on a bibliographic card.

A statement of the general interpretation you are taking, with another quote that confirms your interpretation.

The significance of Butwin's quote, that is, what makes it depart from the general interpretation you have above.

Summary of Butwin's meaning, ending with another more elaborate passage from his paper, and a link to the general thesis.

"In order for the facts of industrial life to take hold they must be bodied forth in a fanciful way" (Butwin, p. 170). The theme of HT is Fact vs. Fancy, the serious vs. the playful, the Head vs. the Heart. (See Collins, p. 36: "One of the main themes of the novel—the contrast between the verbalized head-knowledge and the knowledge of the senses and the heart.") But in Butwin's paper another interpretation of the Fact vs. Fancy dispute appears. For he takes seriously the fact that Dickens was writing HT as a serial in a periodical which he edited, *Household Words*. Dickens was acting in effect as a political journalist. Then "Fancy" takes on the meaning of Dickens's art, his ability to recreate imaginatively for one class the experiences of another class. In this sense, Dickens can be read as claiming to present a truer account (that is, more factual) of the conditions of the day than the unimaginative, but factual, reporting of the daily newspapers. There is therefore a sense in which Dickens can be read as favoring Fact: "Hard Times" is generally read as a denigration of 'hard facts' but at the same time it can be seen as Dickens' attempt to renew rather than reduce the status of fact. He sets out to reclaim fact from the hands of the statisticians by showing that much of what passes for fact in Coketown is really fiction" (Butwin, p. 175.)

FIGURE 6.8  
First draft of a paragraph built around a quotation from secondary sources.

sentence that must be read more than once before the reader can decipher the meaning.

The cause of this kind of problem is very often the use of the passive voice, or the use of negative sentences where a positive sentence is possible, or the use of nouns where verbs are clearer. The surest way to deal with these problems is to find a friend or friends to whom you can read your sentences aloud. If they cannot understand your sentence, change it. And be prepared to change it completely if necessary, breaking one sentence into several if by doing so you clarify the meaning. Be especially wary of words and phrases that you particularly like because they sound imposing: "The genesis of *Hard Times* lay in the Preston Strike." Your friends may indicate that they do not understand this sentence. You may particularly like the opening "The genesis of *Hard Times*,"

A quotation from  
*Hard Times* to which  
Haberman draws  
attention.

Haberman's view of  
the passage.

Haberman's  
interpretation of the  
meaning of the  
remark, with another  
quotation from him.

A thought that occurs  
to you—another  
possible interpretation  
of the dialogue. But to  
decide which  
interpretation is right  
will require reading  
beyond this passage.  
You make a note to  
yourself, and if it  
should turn out to be  
significant you should  
try to assess which  
interpretation is  
correct. But as you  
may not use it, it is  
acceptable in a first  
draft to continue and  
leave a loose end.

"Are you in pain, dear mother?" "I think there's a pain somewhere in the room," said Mrs. Gradgrind, "but I couldn't positively say that I have got it" (HT 198).

This sentence, "one of the most amazing statements in the language," according to Haberman (p. 40), encapsulates the effect of living with a dedicated "Commissioner of Fact" (HT 165) as Mr. Gradgrind. His fanatic insistence that only facts are worth knowing has led Mrs. Gradgrind to doubt her very experience of pain. She knows there is pain, but is it hers? Her state is desperate, as Haberman sees it: "So withdrawn is she from her being, that she cannot experience her own pain" (40). This is surely Fact run rampant. (It is also possible to read her statement as ironical, in which case she is poking fun at Mr. Gradgrind's philosophy of Fact. She is teasing him. Is there any other evidence to show her role is ironic?)

FIGURE 6.9  
First draft of a  
paragraph generated  
from a quotation from  
*Hard Times* and  
secondary sources.

and so you might try to mend it by revising the rest of the sentence. In fact, the trouble lies in the use of "genesis." Less imposing sounding, but clearer, is: "Dickens first thought of writing *Hard Times* when he read about the Preston Strike." Notice also that not only is the revised sentence clearer, but it commits you more specifically to a causal chain. The first version of the sentence can mean almost any kind of relation between the Preston Strike and the novel, excluding only the possibility of the novel's being published before the strike took place. Impressive-sounding words like "genesis" often lead to the suspicion that the writer is fudging, glossing over a fact of which he is not sure.

Beyond the sentence level, writers owe their audience coherent and unified paragraphs. Each paragraph should have a thesis statement and

a commentary upon, a development of, or evidence for that thesis. Ideally, each sentence within a paragraph should advance the argument or make a new point. If not, the paragraph is padded. You can test whether you are advancing the argument by the practice of “interviewing” each paragraph, as we explain that process in chapter 1. As you conduct these interviews, be alert to paragraphs that cover material already presented in other paragraphs.

Repeating yourself is not objectionable, however, when you are telling your reader what you propose to do or what you have done. Readers find it helpful to be given your interpretation of what you are doing while they read you do it. And this need for helpful repetition applies not only at the level of the paper, where you inform the reader in the introduction of what you propose to show and in the conclusion of what you have shown (these had better match), but also at the level of the paragraph, which might well conclude with another formulation of the main point.

When you move from first draft to final paper, you move from writer-based prose to reader-based prose. One particular danger in the transition is that you may fail to provide enough explanation for your points. You will have done sufficient research to be comfortable with distinctions or references that another person not as familiar as you are with the material may find mysterious. Again, check the reactions of your friends, and again, their responses should be taken as decisive. The context may be clear to you, but if your readers do not understand, consider some revision.

Everything we have said about revision to this point assumes a general audience. The obligations above are owed any audience. But when you write a term paper, you have to imagine a very particular audience. Although it is your professor who will read your final paper, you can run into trouble if you take your professor in his role as teacher as your final audience. You might then tend to make oblique references to experiences common to you both, such as classroom discussions, and neglect to provide sufficient context. Your instructor should be thought of as your audience only in the sense that he represents the world of scholars in his field. As he reads your final draft, he will assess it in terms of the standards assumed in his discipline. Defining the audience in this way means that considerations must operate beyond those of clarity and relevance. For one, you are expected to display competence in the conventions of whatever discipline your writing represents. You must take care to document properly, write bibliographies consistently, and follow the format recommended by the discipline. (See chapter 5.) Pay close attention to the style of the articles you read: to what degree is the writing done in the first person? How extensively do they use quotations? What is the typical format of first paragraphs: Do they declare their thesis right away, or lead up to it later in the paper? Do they announce their thesis as a problem they propose to solve or declare an interpretation they propose to defend? Do they begin with an engaging anecdote or an interesting and striking

quotation? Or is the introductory paragraph a simple statement of how the paper will be organized? Thus, when you are taking an introductory course, read research materials for form as well as for content. The style of these articles by scholars in the discipline is the best guide for the form of the term paper.

Here are two paragraphs as they might appear in a revised paper. These paragraphs could have been generated from the examples of paragraphs we gave earlier in the first-draft section of this chapter:

John Holloway complains that in Hard Times the "creed Dickens champions in the novel . . . seems in the main to be that of 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy'."<sup>1</sup> It is, he says, the "standpoint of the mid-Victorian, middle-class Philistine."<sup>2</sup> These are strong words, and a radical attack on Leavis's famous judgment of Hard Times as a "completely serious work of art."<sup>3</sup> There is indeed much to Holloway's position. It is true that the portrayal of trade unionism in the novel is seriously defective, as House shows.<sup>4</sup> It is also true that the representatives of "Fancy," against the Fact of Coketown, are the circus folk, who live by playing. And that play, or amusement, was important to Dickens cannot be doubted, as the title of his first contribution to Household Words—"The Amusements of the People"—indicates.<sup>5</sup> Despite this bibliographical circumstance, the Fact versus Fancy theme in Hard Times, its main theme in the view of many commentators,<sup>6</sup> is more complex and subtle than the contrast of Coketown with the circus seems to indicate. Fancy is more than amusement.

Consider, for example, the scene in which Mr. Gradgrind, originally the representative of Fact,<sup>7</sup> is forced to confront the failure of his educational theories in the person of his own daughter, Louisa. To express her anguish, Louisa uses not the language of Fancy but the language of the Heart: "Where are the graces of my soul. Where are the sentiments of my heart?" (215). In response, her father concedes that those who believe in the wisdom of the heart may be right, and he, a believer in the "wisdom of the Head," wrong. It is not lack of amusement of which

Louisa complains. By "heart" Mr. Gradgrind and Louisa mean the finer sentiments, such as compassion, sympathy, even gratitude, which according to his earlier beliefs should be abolished (283). The heart appears again towards the end of the book, when Mr. Gradgrind appeals to his prize pupil's sense of compassion: "Bitzer, have you a heart?" Bitzer's response is only too true to the Gradgrind philosophy: "The circulation, sir, . . . couldn't be carried on without one" (281). In Bitzer's cynical dismissal of any meaning beyond facts, Mr. Gradgrind is brought face to face with the narrowness of his younger self. The revelation of the barrenness of his philosophy, its exclusion not only of play but of all important values, is complete.

<sup>1</sup> John Holloway, "Hard Times: A History and a Criticism," Dickens and the Twentieth Century, ed. John Gross and Gabriel Pearson (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, Ltd., 1962), p. 168.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 163.

<sup>3</sup> F. R. Leavis, "Hard Times: An Analytic Note," The Great Tradition (New York: New York University Press, 1963), p. 227. Leavis reads the novel as a subtle "confutation of Utilitarianism by life" (p. 236), and a "moral fable" (p. 227).

<sup>4</sup> Humphrey House, The Dickens World, 2nd ed. (1941; rpt. New York: Oxford University Press, 1960), pp. 205-211. Also see David Craig, "Hard Times and the Condition of England," The Real Foundations: Literature and Social Change (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), pp. 125-127.

<sup>5</sup> As cited by Joseph Butwin, "Hard Times: The News and the Novel," Nineteenth Century Fiction, 32 (1977), 171.

<sup>6</sup> David Lodge, "The Rhetoric of Hard Times," Language of Fiction (New York: Columbia University Press, 1966), p. 157; K. J. Fielding, Charles Dickens: A Critical Introduction, 2nd ed. (1953; rpt. London: Longman's, 1965), p. 160;

Philip Collins, "Good Intentions and Bad Results," Twentieth Century Interpretations of Hard Times, ed. Paul Edward Gray (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1969), p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Gradgrind is introduced as "A man of realities . . . ready to weigh and measure any parcel of human nature." Charles Dickens, Hard Times (New York: The New American Library, 1961), p. 12. Hereafter the numbers in parentheses will refer to page numbers of this edition of Hard Times.

Notice that the particular instances of the theme Fact versus Fancy have now been generalized in an attempt to provide a deeper interpretation of the theme than any single critic is prepared to allow. Notice also the structure of the two paragraphs: First, the writer presents the view of one critic and contrasts that view to one of another critic. Then the writer attempts a preliminary evaluation of the first critic's view. The writer makes some concessions to the truth of the second critic's position and cites some evidence to support the second critic's thesis. Then the writer introduces his own thesis, that the theme is in fact richer and more complex. The writer next indicates that he has selected an important topic, since many commentators regard the theme in question as a central one.

In the second paragraph the writer explains two incidents from the novel as evidence for the thesis outlined in the first paragraph. Notice how the transition from the first to the second paragraph is made. By the use of "for example," the first sentence of the second paragraph signals that the thesis set forth at the end of the first paragraph is about to be made more specific. These transitional devices are ways of avoiding having to say at the beginning of each paragraph, "What I propose to say in this paragraph is. . . ."

Notice also how the documentation is done. Footnotes (1) and (2) are merely reference footnotes. See in (1) the differences between double quotes and single quotes. In footnote (3) the writer fills out the position of Leavis beyond what is said in the body of the paragraph. A writer provides this special kind of footnote when he wants to give the reader a little more information than he can conveniently provide in the text. Footnote (4) is an example of how a writer deals with material that is important but not directly related to the central theme. Footnote (5) is an example of how a writer cites from secondary sources. Footnotes (6) and (7) are examples of explaining allusions, and (7) also exemplifies what a writer does with a primary text to which he expects to make many references. It would be tedious to put a number and a footnote each time he makes a reference to *Hard Times*, so the first time he makes a reference

to the novel, he gives the full bibliographical information and says that subsequently numbers within parentheses following a quotation will always refer to this edition of the primary text. (See chapter 5.)

The writer of this excerpt from a term paper in the humanities has learned a great deal about Dickens and about the critical history of *Hard Times*. But the writer is not simply presenting the information for its own sake. He has made selections, and he has shaped the research material to focus on the development of his own thesis. In summary, he has shown that he understands the function of research in the humanities: not to drown out the human voice with obscure references, but to give the individual voice the authority of a scholarly tradition.

- QUESTIONS**
- 1 What specific academic skills do you use when you write a research paper in the humanities?
  - 2 What are the three distinct characteristics of a term research paper as opposed to other types of papers?
  - 3 What is brainstorming? How is it useful in preparing a research paper?
  - 4 What are the major criteria for developing a controlling question?

- EXERCISES**
- 1 Decide which of the following are controlling questions for a humanities research paper:
    - a At what point in his writing career did Dickens write *Hard Times*?
    - b What was the influence of *Hard Times* on the British awareness of the condition of the poor?
    - c Is *Hard Times* one of the most carefully written books in the nineteenth century?
    - d In what ways can *Hard Times* be considered a useful historical source?
  - 2 After you have identified the controlling questions, make lists of the more specific research questions that can be derived from each. Compare your lists with those of classmates.
  - 3 As a class, select a topic that would be appropriate for a research paper. Each student should, individually, narrow the topic by creating controlling questions about the topic. Compare and discuss your questions.
  - 4 As a class, identify those characteristics that distinguish a humanities research paper from research papers in other fields. Make a list of ten topics that are appropriate for a research paper in the humanities.