

Writing Skills for Final Project

ENG 430 | Audre Lorde

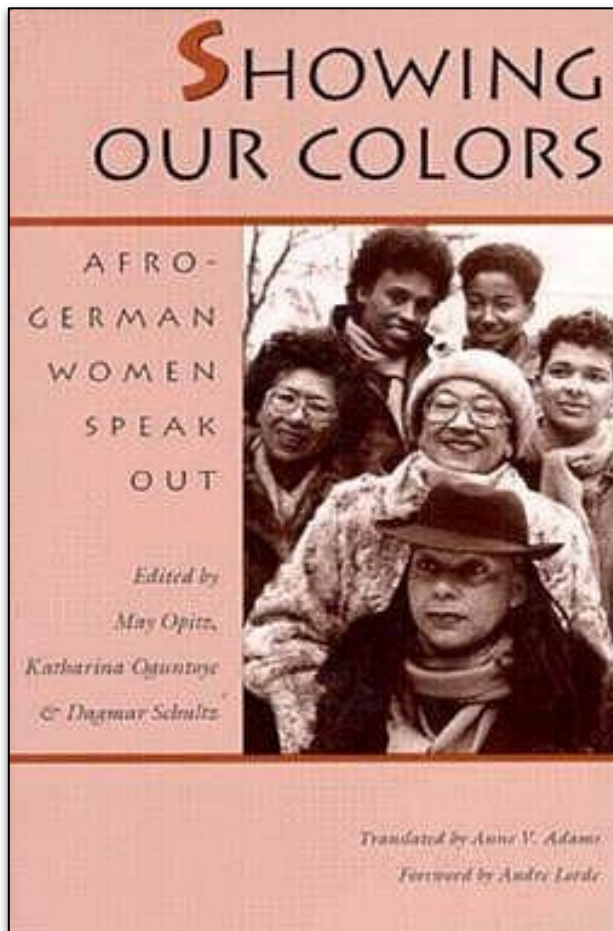
Prior to listening, please read all materials on the website about the final and listen to the first lecture explaining the assignment.

This is **lecture #2**.

Review: What are we doing?

You are reflecting on everything we have learned this semester and picking one key idea that you think is important and would benefit readers beyond our classroom.

Final Projects



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The plan is to group your
final blog posts by category
& create a table of contents
for our collection

This presentation covers

- Thesis
- Motive
- Evidence
- Analysis
- Titles
- Key Terms
- Introductions
- Conclusions
- Incorporating Images

Thesis

From Harvey's "Elements of the Academic Essay"

1. Thesis: your **main insight** or idea about a text or topic, and the *main* proposition that your essay demonstrates. It should be true but arguable (not obviously or patently true, but one alternative among several), **be limited enough** in scope to be argued in a short composition and with available evidence, and get to the heart of the text or topic being analyzed (not be peripheral). It should be **stated early** in some form and at some point recast sharply (not just be implied), and it should **govern the whole essay** (not disappear in places).

Your thesis should be....

1. **Arguable** - make a claim (not just state a topic)
2. **Specific** - not vague generalizations
3. **Important** - teach the reader something

The prompts are intended to help you craft a thesis that meets these criteria

Thesis **does not** have to
be one sentence

Example: which thesis statement is more arguable, specific, and important?

1. Audre Lorde is an important writer.

2. Lorde's *The Cancer Journals* can help us understand the sexism of the medical-industrial complex.

obviously, this one!

Example: which thesis statement is more arguable, specific, and important?

1. Lorde's work conveys the importance of creating an intimate classroom.

...why is it important? Important to whom? What will creating this intimate classroom allow me to teach?

2. Lorde's teaching materials [or teaching philosophy] conveys how creating an intimate classroom can help students learn about...[fill in the blank. Racism? Sexism? Inequality? Math?]

aim for this specificity

Sample arguments/theses for Lorde project

1. Lorde's *The Cancer Journals* can help us understand the sexism of the medical-industrial complex.
2. Lorde's teaching material demonstrate how creating an intimate learning environment can help students learn about racism.
3. In a moment when gays and lesbians experienced widespread discrimination, Lorde's "Love Poem" depicts love between women as natural, beautiful, and sacred.

A good thesis can actually
serve as an outline for your
essay

In a moment when **gays and lesbians experienced widespread discrimination**, Lorde's "Love Poem" depicts love between women as **natural, beautiful, and sacred**.

1. Introduction
 - a. Hook
 - b. Identify purpose/motive - you are going to learn something interesting and important by reading this post!
 - c. Thesis
2. Possible background paragraph on Lorde - who, what, when, where, why (this could also go in intro)
3. Historical context - describe **discrimination against gays and lesbians** in the moment the poem was written
4. 1-2 paragraphs looking at **natural imagery** in "Love Poem"
5. 1-2 paragraphs looking at **images of beauty** in "Love Poem"
6. 1-2 paragraphs looking at **religious/sacred imagery** in "Love Poem"
7. Conclusion - why is it important for readers to understand Lorde's "Love Poem" as an act of resistance against discrimination?

Motive or Purpose

Motive or Purpose

- Why are you writing this? What do you hope others will learn by reading your post?
- Your motive should be **directed to your audience**.
 - If you have a specific audience in mind, you're welcome to highlight that upfront. Maybe you are writing specifically for other pre-service teachers.
 - “In this post, I show how Audre Lorde’s philosophy of intimate teaching can be useful to pre-service teachers. More specifically, I demonstrate how [thesis].”
- One excellent way to establish motive is by **identifying a commonly-held idea**, and then announcing how your blog post will challenge this (aka push us to think differently and in more complex ways) about this idea.
 - “Most often we think of memoirs as a form of life writing that celebrates an individual’s triumph over various obstacles. However, Audre Lorde’s *Zami* complicates our understanding of memoir by emphasizing her indebtedness to a network of women.”

Evidence & Analysis

Review: Evidence

3. *Evidence*: the data—facts, examples, or details—that you refer to, quote, or summarize to support your thesis. There needs to be *enough* evidence to be persuasive; it needs to be the right *kind* of evidence to support the thesis (with no obvious pieces of evidence overlooked); it needs to be sufficiently *concrete* for the reader to trust it (e.g. in textual analysis, it often helps to find one or two key or representative passages to quote and focus on); and if summarized, it needs to be summarized *accurately* and fairly.

Analysis

4. Analysis: the work of breaking down, interpreting, and commenting upon the data, of saying what can be inferred from the data such that it supports a thesis... **Analysis is what you do with data when you go beyond observing or summarizing it: you show how its parts contribute to a whole or how causes contribute to an effect; you draw out the significance or implication not apparent to a superficial view...**

Hold the reader's hand. Help them see what you see in the evidence. How does it support the main point of your paragraph and of your blog post as a whole?



Key Principles

- All claims must be supported by evidence.
- How are you going to convince a skeptical reader -- someone who doesn't already believe you? How are you going to provide them with sufficient evidence so that they change their minds?

Evidence and Analysis - Example

- Your reader might be someone who doesn't realize the extent of racial inequality in contemporary society. They might think racism is in the past -- didn't we solve that already?
- Which version is more persuasive?

Racial inequality is a major problem in our society.

Racial inequality is a major problem in our society. According to a [recent survey](#) by the Census Bureau, “Black families earn just \$57.30 for every \$100 in income earned by white families...[and] for every \$100 in white family wealth, black families hold just \$5.04.” Moreover, African Americans are [five times more likely](#) to be incarcerated and [five times more likely](#) to be shot by a police officer than white people.

Titles

What makes a good title?

- “The Uses of the Erotic”
 - Oooh, the erotic! Like, sex? In what sense could this be useful? I want to know!
- “The Urgency of Intersectionality”
 - I’ve heard about this thing called intersectionality, but I want to know more, especially if it’s urgent!
- “Love as Political Resistance”
 - Love is how we feel towards another person. How could this be a form of political resistance? Resistance to what? I must know more!
- Look at your bookshelf or think about articles that you’ve been prompted to click on via social media. What grabs your attention?

Titles

“It should both **interest** and **inform**. To inform—i.e. inform a general reader who might be browsing in an essay collection or bibliography—your title should give **the subject and focus of the essay**. To interest, your title might include a **linguistic twist, paradox, sound pattern**, or striking phrase taken from one of your sources... You can combine the interesting and informing functions in a single title or split them into title and subtitle. The interesting element shouldn’t be too cute; the informing element shouldn’t go so far as to state a thesis.”

— Gordon Harvey, “The Elements of the Academic Essay”

Title Template One

- Choose 2-3 words from your essay and put them together creatively
- Use a colon and then explicitly state the topic of your essay

Love, Murder, and Magic: The Irrational Passions in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*

Imagining the Other: Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as Colonial Propaganda

For Love or Money?: Interrogating the American Dream in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*

Dreams Still Deferred: Visions of Racial Justice in Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun*

Title Template Two

Choose a short, eye-catching quote from the text and use this to introduce your topic.

- [Short Quote] : [Topic of Your Paper]

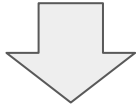
“Real tragedy is never resolved”: Postcolonial Conditions in Chinua Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease*

“In this house, there is still God”: Intergenerational Conflict in Lorraine Hansberry’s *A Raisin in the Sun*

Recent examples from ENG430

The Power of Touch

- This title fulfills the “interest” requirement but does not fully “inform”

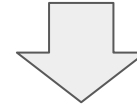


The Power of Touch in Audre Lorde’s Teaching Materials

- This version both interests and informs. If I’m scrolling through our website trying to learn more about Lorde’s approach to teaching, I now know to read Kara’s post.

Audre Lorde’s Pivotal Philosophy in the Classroom

- Meets the “inform” requirement, but lacks specificity
- Pivotal = important. Important how? To whom?



Audre Lorde’s Intimate Approach to Teaching or Audre Lorde’s Intimate Classrooms or Intimacy and Vulnerability in Audre Lorde’s Classrooms

- These are much more specific. I’ve never thought about intimacy in the classroom before! Immediately I want to read and learn more.

Titles



**Starving, angry and cannibalistic:
America's rats are getting
desperate amid coronavirus
pandemic**



LIVING

Starving rats are resorting to war and cannibalism to survive coronavirus lockdown

By Hannah Sparks

April 13, 2020 | 12:44pm | Updated



Christopher Sadowski

Key Terms

Always define your key terms!

If you're explaining the centrality of **intimacy** and **vulnerability** to Lorde's teaching philosophy, you should define these early on.

Paragraph Organization

Paragraph Organization

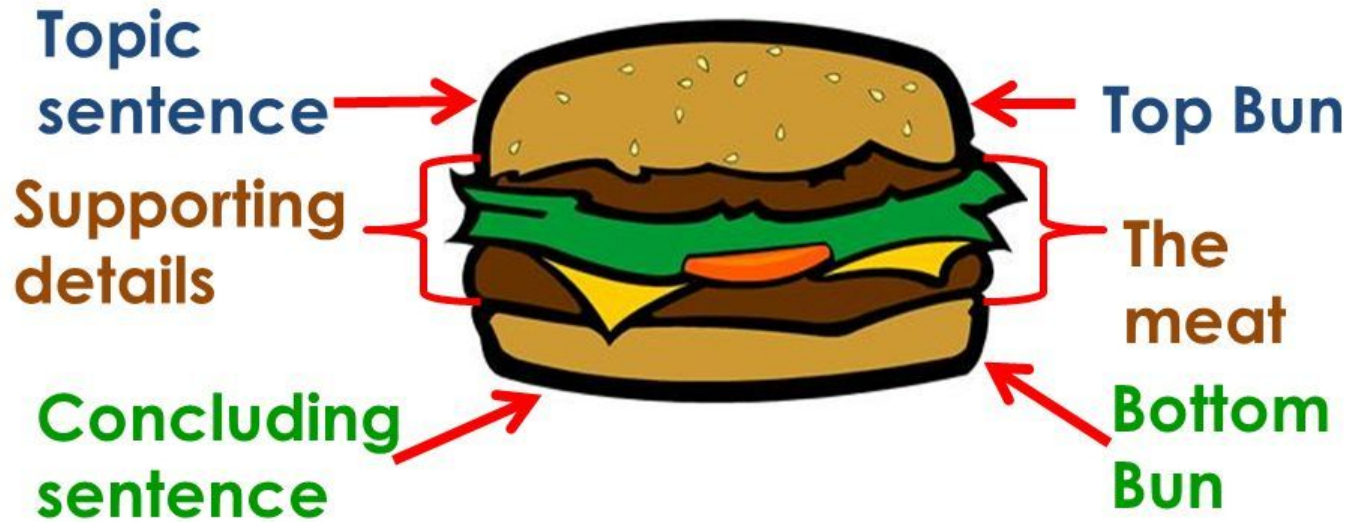
General Rule: Keep one idea to one paragraph.

- Topic sentence: a mini-thesis for your paragraph
- One-two examples that support your mini-thesis
- Analyze and interpret those examples: show how they relate to your argument

Always ask yourself: what's the point of this paragraph?

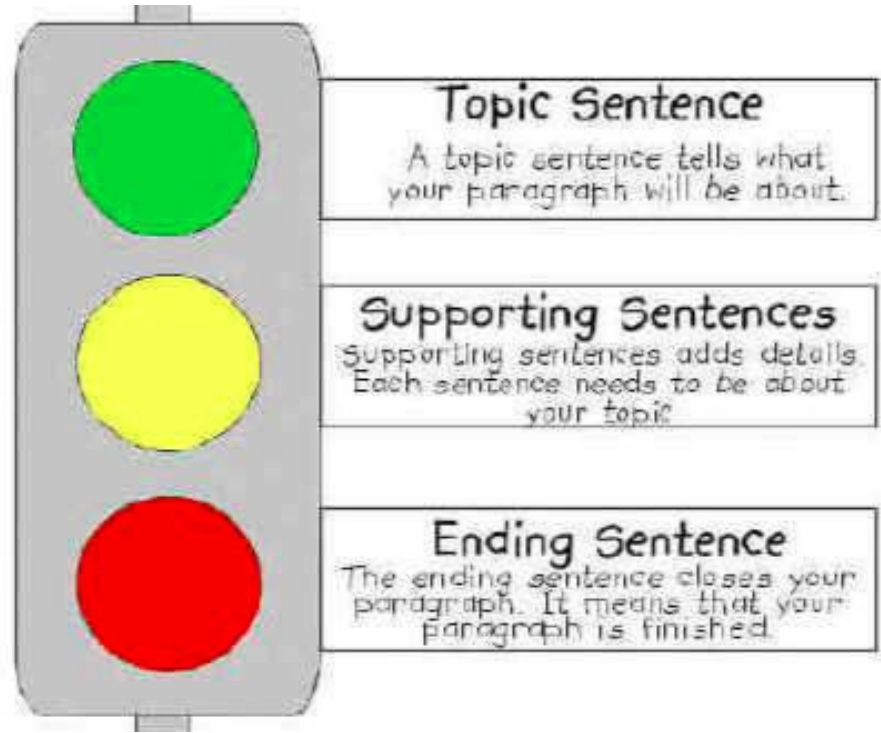
Paragraph Sandwich

Think of a paragraph as a sandwich. It has three parts.



Topic Sentences

A topic sentence is a sentence that indicates in a general way what idea or thesis the paragraph is going to deal with. An easy way to make sure your reader understands the topic of the paragraph is to put your topic sentence near the beginning of the paragraph. Regardless of whether you include an explicit topic sentence or not, you should be able to easily summarize what the paragraph is about.



Topic Sentences

1. **Make a claim about the new topic/idea:** a mini-thesis for your paragraph (keep your paragraph on track)
 - a. As you're writing, **refer back to the topic sentence** of your paragraph.
 - b. If your topic sentence makes the argument that Lorde's "Love Poem" compares the curves a woman's body to the beauty of mountain, but you find yourself analyzing an assignment she gave her students, then something is wrong
 - c. When revising, **compare the first and last sentence** of each paragraph. Are they about the same topic?
2. **Relate explicitly to your thesis** (keep your essay on track)
 - a. Is this paragraph helping me prove some part of my thesis?
 - b. If not, either the thesis or the paragraph need to be adjusted

Anatomy of a paragraph

1. **Topic sentence**
2. Piece of **evidence** one
3. **Analysis** of evidence one
4. Piece of **evidence** two
5. **Analysis** of evidence two
6. Optional concluding sentence

Review: [Anatomy of a Close Reading Paragraph](#)

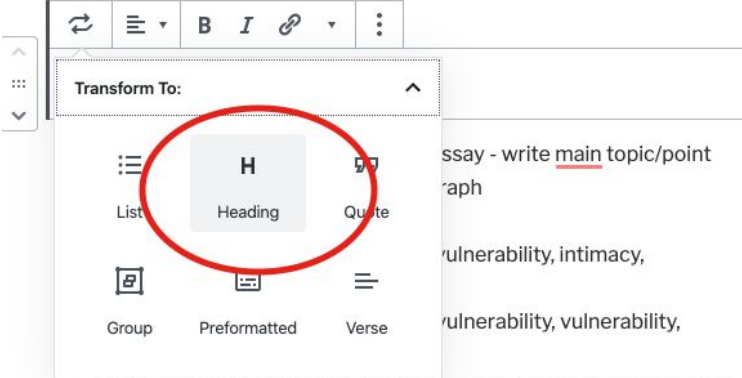
Paragraph Organization: Advice

1. Create a **reverse outline** of your essay - write main topic/point in the margins next to each paragraph
2. Group **similar ideas** together
 - a. Not: Intimacy, vulnerability, vulnerability, intimacy, vulnerability
 - b. Instead: Intimacy, intimacy, vulnerability, vulnerability, vulnerability
3. You may have **multiple paragraphs on similar topics** (see above)
4. Aim for **short paragraphs** over long ones

Use **headings** to break up information

- Reading on a screen is difficult on our eyes! Too much text and we'll give up.
- Consider using sub-headings throughout your blog post to break up information

Sample Post



The screenshot shows a rich text editor interface. At the top, there's a toolbar with icons for undo, list, bold, italic, link, and a more options menu. Below the toolbar, a 'Transform To' dropdown menu is open, showing options: List, Group, Preformatted, Verse, and Heading. The 'Heading' option is highlighted with a red circle. To the right of the menu, there's a preview of text: 'Essay - write main topic/point graph' and 'vulnerability, intimacy, vulnerability, vulnerability,'.

3. You may have **multiple paragraphs on similar topics** (see above)

4. Aim for **short paragraphs** over long ones

Advice on Conclusions

- Say something to the reader that you couldn't have said to them at the beginning of the paper
- Remind them what you have taught/showed them
- Return to an idea, anecdote, or example from your introduction and present it in a new/different way using your argument

Introductions

Introductions

- Similar to a title, the introduction should **interest** and **inform**
- Introduce **the topic** (quick overview, 1-2 sentences) and **motive** - what am I going to learn from this?
- Your introduction should include **your argument/thesis**

Strategies

- Set up **problem, question, or tension** that you will address in your paper
- Identify a **commonly held idea or assumption** that your paper will challenge
- Begin with a **key example** that demonstrates your argument
- Begin with a **surprising fact or statistic** related to your argument

Conclusions

Conclusion

- Say something to the reader that you couldn't have said to them at the beginning of the paper
- Remind them what you have taught/showed them
- Return to an idea, anecdote, or example from your introduction and present it in a new/different way using your argument
- Trace the implications of your argument
- Make a recommendation (if appropriate)
 - Ex. a paper on the cognitive benefits of watching television might suggest allowing children to watch a certain amount of television rather than banning it or leaving it unregulated.
- Introduce new questions that have emerged from your analysis
- Ask yourself: what do you want to leave your reader thinking about?

Conclusions

Advice: stop when you're finished. Don't overdo your conclusion. If you have covered all your points and are reasonably satisfied with what you've said, quit. Don't bore your reader by tacking on a needless recapitulation.

Because this is a digital
publication, you can
incorporate **relevant**
images

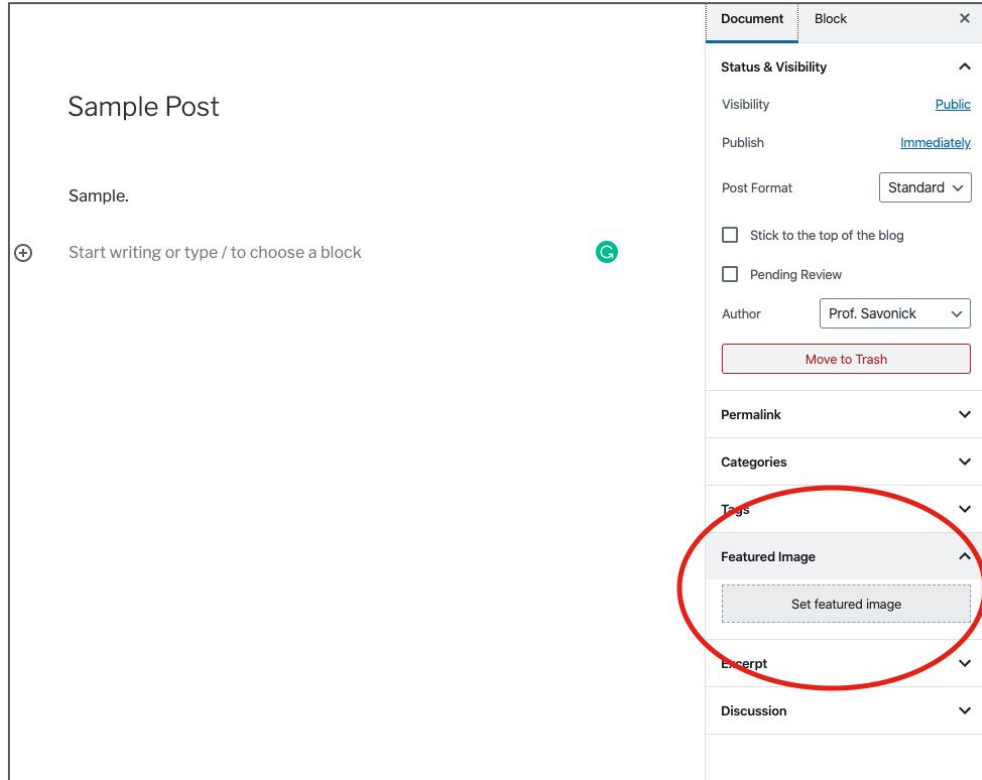
No GIFs for GIFs sake

Sample Post

Sample.



Please make sure your post has a featured image



The image shows a screenshot of the WordPress post editor interface. On the left, the main content area displays "Sample Post" and "Sample." Below this is a prompt: "Start writing or type / to choose a block", accompanied by a plus icon and a green circular icon. On the right, the "Document" settings sidebar is open, showing various options. The "Featured Image" section is highlighted with a red circle and contains a button labeled "Set featured image". Other visible settings include "Status & Visibility" (Public, Immediately), "Post Format" (Standard), "Stick to the top of the blog", "Pending Review", "Author" (Prof. Savonick), "Move to Trash", "Permalink", "Categories", "Tags", "Excerpt", and "Discussion".

In the end, we will have a co-authored class collection

Keywords for Literary Studies

The grid contains the following images and labels:

- Art**: Abstract colorful brushstrokes.
- Alienation**: A silhouette of a person on a beach looking out at the ocean.
- Assimilation**: A man and a woman in traditional headscarves talking.
- Class**: A person sitting on a bench holding a sign that says "Seeking Humanitarian".
- Culture**: A globe of the Earth.
- Feminism**: A sign that says "THE FUTURE IS FEMALE".
- Feminist Killjoy**: A sign with the word "Feminist" repeated in various colors.
- Gender**: Red and blue gender symbols.
- Ghosts (1)**: A blurry, ghostly figure with hands.
- Ghosts (2)**: A person walking in a dark, atmospheric hallway.
- Haunt**: A dark, moody street scene at night.
- Microaggressions (1)**: A group of people holding signs.
- Microaggressions (2)**: A person sitting on a bench under a "CULURE" sign.
- Power**: A text-based graphic with the word "Power" in a large font.

The collection includes the following items:

- MISS REPRESENTATION**: A book cover featuring a woman's face and a hand holding a smartphone.
- Technology and the Sexualization of Young Women**: A hand holding a smartphone displaying a man's face.
- Dating App Discrimination**: A hand holding a smartphone displaying a man's face.
- Women's Rights Are Human Rights**: A red t-shirt with the text "KEEP YOUR POLICIES OFF MY BODY".
- LGBTQIA Discrimination**: A vertical rainbow flag.
- Digital Grief**: A book cover by Rose Mostafa-Shoukry with the text "About Start".

Some of you may remember this from Intro to Multicultural Literature and Digital Divides

How to find an image that you have ***permission*** to use

- Just because an image is on the internet, does not mean you have permission to incorporate it into your project
- Create your own
- [Pixabay](#)
- [Unsplash](#)
- Google Images (Tools, Usage Rights, Labeled for Noncommercial Reuse)
- Always **cite the source of your image**

What's next?

- Complete **rough draft** due at **4 pm** on **Friday, April 24**
(submit [here](#))
- Small group conferences (sign up [here](#))
- Peer review (instructions forthcoming)