



**S T I N G R A Y**  
**An Aid to Argument, Voice, and Citation (MLA, APA)**



## **FALL 2010**

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# OVERVIEW

## ***DESCRIPTION***

*Stingray* is a curriculum aid designed to help students (1) develop ways of entering an already existent critical conversation about a topic and (2) acquire documentation and citation skills. The *Stingray* instruction packet is designed to be as self-explanatory as possible. Worksheets are included so that instructors have the option of collecting gradable work. Three individualized e-tests administered and graded by the editors are available for registered students to take.

## ***DESIGN***

The pdf is designed to be used primarily as an on-screen document. However, if a printed copy is desired, the pdf is designed to be printed front and back on 8 x 11" copier paper. The best way to store the printed pages is in a three-ring binder or a pocket folder. The white space on a page is purposeful, serving to de-clutter the page so the content presented can be visually grasped more efficiently.

## ***EXAM COPIES***

Teachers who use *Stingray* can request a free pdf and/or bound copy (4" x 5") of the current instruction packet. Email [stingrayeditors@gmail.com](mailto:stingrayeditors@gmail.com).

## ***INDIVIDUALIZED TESTS FROM THE EDITORS***

Teachers can elect to have their students take up to three exams provided by, and graded by, the *Stingray* editors. Each test is individualized in that, while the general level of difficulty of the tests remains the same, the specific questions of an exam have been altered from the questions of other exams so that each student must do his or her own work. Students must register for each test separately by sending an email to [stingrayeditors@gmail.com](mailto:stingrayeditors@gmail.com) expressing their intention to take the exam (see below). A test will be emailed to the student ten days before the deadline of the exam set either by the teacher or by the editors (see default schedule). The student emails his or her answers to the editors, who grade them and notify the student of the correct answers and the grade earned. No late exams will be graded. Teachers can request a spreadsheet of the scores. The test is open-book. Teachers can request a sample test by emailing the editors.

Teachers can custom set the exam schedule by emailing their desired deadlines for the exams to the editors at [stingrayeditors@gmail.com](mailto:stingrayeditors@gmail.com). Or teachers can choose to follow the default schedule:

### **Fall Schedule**

Exam "1" or "1+" (Summary and Paraphrase)	due 30 Sep
Exam "2" or "2+" (Paraphrase and Quotation Mechanics)	due 30 Oct
Exam "3M", "3A", "3B", "3M+", "3A+", or "3B+" (Cumulative w/ Source Entry)	due 25 Nov

### **Spring Schedule**

Exam "1" or "1+" (Summary and Paraphrase)	due 20 Feb
Exam "2" or "2+" (Paraphrase and Quotation Mechanics)	due 25 Mar
Exam "3M", "3A", "3B", "3M+", "3A+", or "3B+" (Cumulative w/ Source Entry)	due 25 Apr

### **Key**

+	=	Exam is advanced version of regular exam
M	=	Exam is over MLA format only
A	=	Exam is over APA format only
B	=	Exam over both MLA and APA format

Students who plan to take one or more of the exams should send an email requesting each exam separately. This way, a reply-thread is established for each exam, making it possible for the editors to track which exams have been sent to whom, and when they have been sent. The email should include the student's name, his or her teacher's name and school affiliation, and can read something like this: "My name is John Doe. My teacher is Ms. J. Smith from Roanoke U. Please register me for Exam 2+." The email can be sent anytime. The exam will be sent ten days before its custom or default deadline.

Since each test is graded by hand, please allow up to ten days for the test results to be determined and sent to the student.

### ***COST***

The cost of the *Stingray* pdf is \$16. This cost covers all student/editor interaction.

### ***ORDERING & REFUND POLICY***

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## IMPORTANT NOTES TO STUDENTS

# Please read!

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**SECOND**, *Stingray* has exams you can order from the editors. Your teacher may request you to order one or more of these exams. You must order each exam separately by sending an email to the editors requesting the exam. Be sure to include your name, your teacher’s name, and your school’s name in the request email. The email can look something like this:

“My name is Jill Suh. My teacher is Rob McDow from Miami U. Please send me Exam 2.”

Your test will come as a reply to this email, and you must submit the finished exam as a further reply to the test email. In this way an email-thread is set up that helps the editors keep track of test numbers and dates tests were given out and then received back.

These exams are given out and received according to one of two possible schedules—the default schedule set by the editors (see the current dates by clicking the “Schedule” tab at the “Textbooks” page at [www.openlatch.com](http://www.openlatch.com)) or a custom schedule designed by your teacher. Please pay careful attention to the schedule. No exams will be given out on the day of an exam, so please request your test well in advance. All exams must be returned by 11:59 pm of the due date or earlier. No late exams will be graded.

NOTE: Only students who have purchased the pdf can request and submit exams.

**THIRD**, you may want to set up a new Gmail email box to make the testing process easier. Gmail has many formatting features which will help you when you have to underline, highlight, or italicize items in the tests. Also, a separate email box may help organize your work and keep track of upcoming tests. Go to [www.gmail.com](http://www.gmail.com) and click on the “Open a New Account” button. The process of setting up a new email box is surprisingly easy. Just don’t lose your new user name and password! (We recommend you send this information to yourself in an email addressed to your usual email box.)

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# Ch. 1: THE BASICS

## Types of Research

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### • Informative Research

Informative research deals with facts. Often this is information that can be counted, measured publically re-examined, experimented upon, and documented.

book reports (*pure summary of plot or of facts reported, journalistic style*)

newspaper articles (*who, what, when, where, why, how*)

field research (*experiments, surveys, polls, questionnaires, explorations*)

statistics (*government census information, graphs, poll percentages, etc.*)

school textbooks

encyclopedias

### • Argumentative Research

Argumentative research contains information but uses it to reach an original conclusion about something. The information is used to support the conclusion, or to show that the conclusion is a reasonable, possible, and even probably one.

journal articles (*especially in philosophy, literature, law, and religion, but also in the social sciences*)

academic books (*especially in philosophy, literature, law, and religion, but also in the social sciences*)

campaign speeches and ads (*presidential campaigns, gubernatorial races, etc.*)

certain magazine articles (*especially editorials or opinion pieces*)

## What Is an Argument?

---

An **argument** must have these two ingredients:

- a central claim or conclusion
- reasons for that claim or conclusion

This is a claim, but because it is alone, it is not an argument:

*Driving 10 miles over the speed limit results in a 10% increase in fatal accidents.*

When the claim is combined with other claims, it becomes an argument:

*Texas, Arkansas, Washington, Pennsylvania, and Nevada have speed limits of 65 mhp.*

*Michigan and Wyoming have speed limits of 75 mph.*

*Texas, Arkansas, Washington, Pennsylvania, and Nevada have an average of 500 fatal accidents per year.*

*Michigan and Wyoming have an average of 550 fatal accidents per yea .*

*Driving 10 miles over the speed limit results in a 10% increase in fatal accidents.*

Because the other claims work to support the claim that driving 10 miles over the speed limit results in a 10% increase in fatal accidents, this claim is called the **conclusion of the argument**. The other claims can be called **the premises of the argument**.

Main claim	=	Conclusion	=	Thesis	=	Main Point
Minor claims	=	Premises	=	Reasons	=	Sub-points

## What Is a Thesis?

---

A **thesis** is the conclusion of an argumentative research paper. It can be referred to as the “thesis,” the “conclusion,” the “main idea,” the “major claim,” and the “point of the paper.”

A thesis statement is a declarative sentence. It has a truth value (it is either true or false, although it might not be obvious which).

- Not a thesis:
- 1) The wording of gun-control laws. (This is a topic.)
  - 2) How do women talk differently from men? (This is a question)

- Thesis examples:
- 1) The wording of gun-control laws is left intentionally vague to allow open interpretation.
  - 2) Women are consistently less accusative in their speech when they confront their professional superiors than are men.

An argumentative thesis statement takes a position on a topic. The thesis does not have to be over an openly controversial topic to do this.

- Openly controversial:
- 1) Prime-time television has no obligation to regulate profanity in shows intended for adults.
  - 2) Advertisements are deliberately worded to trick consumers into making wrong assumptions.

- Not-so-controversial, but still a “position”:
- 1) The early Quakers of England broke accepted grammar usage in order to make a social statement.
  - 2) The process of designing a presidential speech turns the president into a rhetorical robot instead of a genuine individual and thus undervalues the audience of the speech.

Make sure that your thesis statement is not too broad. An over-extended claim can cause you to write a surface-level overview that does not do justice to the issue.

- Too broad:
- 1) Hate speech is alive and well in the United States.
  - 2) Great orators of this last century are primarily responsible for the recent social advances in civil rights.

Finally, make sure your thesis is complex enough that it allows you to present meaningful research in order to support it. A thesis that does not need much research will only leave you grasping for ways to legitimately extend your paper.

- Not complex enough:
- 1) For the year 2000, *The Simpsons* was America’s most watched cartoon. (Also, this does not take a position.)
  - 2) *MTV* videos communicate most effectively to teenagers. (This is obvious, as the audience is mostly teenagers.)

## What Is a Topic?

---

A **topic** is not a statement or claim. It is just the person, thing, or idea that you are making the claim about.

These are thesis statements (not topics):

*Gun control is unconstitutional.*

*The United States is a republic, not a democracy.*

*Wooden park benches are better than iron ones.*

Notice that every one of the three above statements is a declarative statement and thus is either true or false. You may not know whether these statements are in fact true or false, but you can see that they have to be one or the other.

These are the topics of these claims:

CLAIM = *Gun control is unconstitutional.*

- Topic: gun control

CLAIM = *The United States is a republic, not a democracy.*

- Topic: political nature of the United States

CLAIM = *Wooden park benches are better than iron ones.*

- Topic: park benches

Notice that if someone were to say to you, “Wooden park benches are better than iron ones, true or false?” you could at least take a stab at answering by saying true. You could also say you don’t know. But if someone were to say to you, “Park benches, true or false?” you probably would respond by saying, “I don’t understand what you are asking.” This is because you inherently understand that a topic does not have a truth value while a thesis does.

Topic = the person, thing, or idea you are researching.

Thesis = the point or claim you have decided to make about this person, thing, or idea.

## What Is Support?

---

**Support** is anything that is given in hopes of making the thesis more believable or convincing. If the thesis is . . .

*Driving 10 miles over the speed limit results in a 10% increase in fatal accidents.*

. . . then the following statements are the actual support of the thesis:

- *Texas, Arkansas, Washington, Pennsylvania, and Nevada have speed limits of 65 mhp.*
- *Michigan and Wyoming have speed limits of 75 mph.*
- *TX, AK, WA, PA, and NV have an average of 500 fatal accidents per year.*
- *MI and WY have an average of 550 fatal accidents per year.*

Types of support:

### ● Brute facts

statistics and measurements (*“The human body is 60-70% water.”*) (*“The sun is 93 million miles from Earth.”*)

historical data (*“America gained independence in 1776.”*) (*“On Friday, 10 April 2005, it rained in Philadelphia.”*)

experiments (*“Chemotherapy is an effective treatment against many types of cancer.”*)

### ● Logic

deduction (*“If all entry-level firemen are community volunteers, and if no community volunteers can get bonus pay, then no entry-level firemen can get bonus pay.”*)

induction (*“Every raven I have seen is black. I conclude all ravens are black.”* *“So far, 95 out of 100 people say they like chocolate. I bet the next person I see likes chocolate.”*)

presuppositions (*“A thing cannot be both itself and not itself.”* *“It is wrong to murder.”* *“Clear communication is a good thing.”*)

definitions (*“By ‘liberty’ I mean the ability to act according to one’s desires.”* *“Man is a featherless biped.”* *“Let’s use the word ‘fractupulus’ to mean a meal only half cooked.”*)

### ● Testimony

professional, authoritative (*textbooks, academic publications, expert opinion/instruction*)

collective voice (*“Most doctors choose Aleve!”*) (*“All the mothers I know like Huggies diapers over Pampers.”*)

essential appeal (*I know that I do not pain, so I will assume you don’t like it either.*)