

# Super Mega Ultra Connection Packet Deluxe

## Why Connection?

Before you can start understanding the intricacies of connection in Expository Writing, it'll probably help to understand *why* we connect.

Always remember that this class is about, not writing per se, but ***critical thinking***. The way we teach you critical thinking is by presenting you with writings containing complex ideas and then asking you to place those essays (and, more crucially, those **ideas**) into relation with each other. Connection, then, is the very stuff of critical thinking: it demonstrates your ability to relate, evaluate, and manipulate complex ideas. *Because* it focuses on the work you can do with ideas, it's a valuable skill for whatever you decide to do in college, and in life.

We might also think about project/argument as something like a macro form of the nitty gritty thinking that connection itself represents. You begin by thinking about the essays in general and from there formulate a project, which becomes a plan for your critical thinking. You then pursue (and prove) that project by the work you do in the paper through connection, a kind of micro thinking that completes the macro thinking of the project. They work together: the project provides the plan and the connection provides the execution. Connection alone is aimless; project alone is unproven. You need both.

Connection, then, is vital to this class, and on a few levels. In terms of the "genre" of an Expository Writing paper, connection is the stuff of proof—the evidence for the argument you want to pursue. In terms of grading, connection is a constant component of the grading criteria, so the better you can connect, the better you will do in this class. In terms of the goals of this class, connection most directly shows your ability to think critically.

But why do we call it connection? It may be useful to have some history of this term.

## The History

Connection, you see, was not always called connection in the Writing Program. Or, to put it more precisely, though it's a term we've always used, it's also a term which has absorbed a number of other ideas and concepts. Thus, the term itself has a history and a genealogy. Understanding it may help you understand just what it means.<sup>1</sup>

The Writing Program has always placed an emphasis on a student's ability to work with quotation. In part, that's a disciplinary thing. The Writing Program, after all, is a part of the English department, and what we do in the English department is analyze text. But even more than that, working with quotation demonstrates important skills with analysis and interpretation—the thinking skills we want you to learn.

One term that's related to connection is "close reading." That's a term borrowed from literary analysis, and it means paying very close attention to the words of a quotation, building your analysis from what is and isn't said. You can think of this as the third type of

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<sup>1</sup> Note: I am playing fast and loose with history here, sketching things with a very broad brush and a very murky palette. The point here is to help you understand what all goes through the head of a Writing Program instructor when the term "connection" is used. Given I only have access to one such head (my own) I can only try and recreate the history I myself carry around for the term.

quotation use we've discussed in class (see Supplement One for more on the types of quotation use). More generally, when people talk about "analyzing a quotation" this is usually what they mean.

Another term that was used early on, back when I first started teaching, was "frame/case." This language, in fact, has survived in some of our other writing classes (though it's on the way out there, too). In this language, you take a quotation with a concept or idea from one essay (the "frame") and then use it to look at the ideas or events of another essay (the "case"). The first essay became a "lens" through which you would look at the second essay. This particular language is related to other academic disciplines, such as the social sciences, where you analyze a certain phenomenon (the case material, such as teen suicide) by using the theoretical concepts from a particular school of thought (the frame, such as psychoanalysis).

"Close reading" never really caught on, of course, because we were most interested in what students could do *between* essays. "Frame/case" didn't last long either, because it limits what's possible between the essays (one is **THE** frame, one is **THE** case). But these ideas (and more) have been and still are bundled into the idea "connection."

Today, connection is a code word for instructors in the Writing Program. It means, essentially, the ability to work with text. Primarily, this means the ability to work closely with quotation, though it might also mean the ability to work with the ideas of the texts. The "classic" connection, in this current incarnation of the word, is a paragraph that uses a quotation from one essay to introduce a concept which is then applied to, complicated by, or more generally related to a concept from another essay also illustrated by quotation. The skeletal form of this idea of connection is represented by the Super Secret Formula (see Supplement Two).

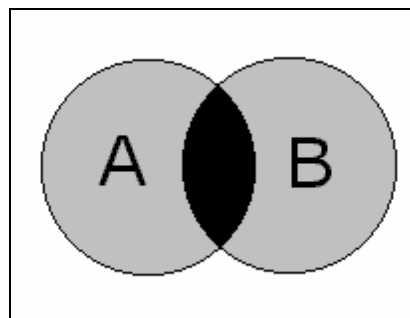
### The Basics

So that's where connection came from, and why it's here. Now, the essential key to understanding connection:

*Connection is not something you find; it's something you **do**.*

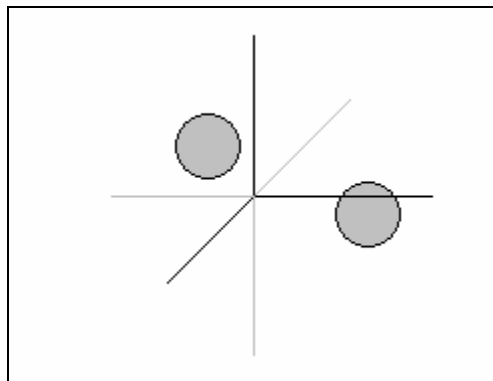
Let that be your mantra. Repeat it over and over as you work on your papers.

Too often, people just "look for the connections." This movement suggests that the relationships between the essays are already there, and you just have to find them and then more or less list them in the paper. If we could visualize this conception of connection, it might look something like this:

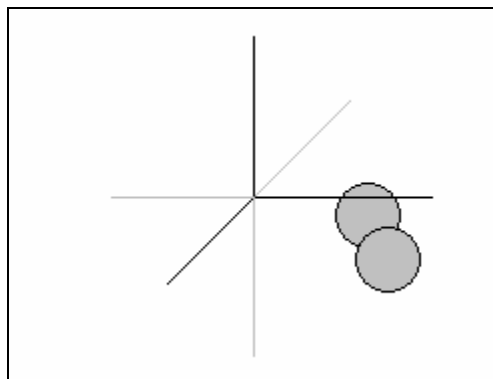


The connections lie in that overlapping region. The problem is that this conception removes your agency. *You* are not doing anything with the essays; they've already done it themselves. But, if you're not doing anything to relate the essays, then you're not really thinking critically. In other words, if the connections are preexisting, just there waiting to be discovered, then no critical thinking is happening. You're just pointing to what already exists.

It's a common lament, and I'm sure you've made it at least once in dealing with the assignments of this class: "But I can't *find* any connections between these essays!" Of course not. That's because they're not there. Rather than thinking of the essays two-dimensionally, it may be better to visualize connection three-dimensionally:



The essays, to start, aren't even near each other. You probably know that feeling already: "What do potatoes have to do with knowledge workers?" You don't find the connection, you make it, by literally bringing the ideas of the essay together in some form:



Connection, then, is a *movement between the ideas of two (or more) essays*. And it's not a movement the essays make; it's a movement you make, and in pursuit of your project.

So, in order to evaluate a connection, we really need to consider two things: *what* are you trying to move between the essays and *how* are you trying to move it.

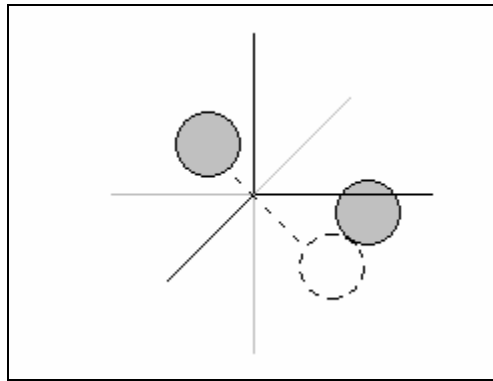
### The What:

Given that connection is a code word for work with quotation, the “what” you connect will most often be actual chunks of text. But there are many “what”’s when it comes to connection, some stronger than others:

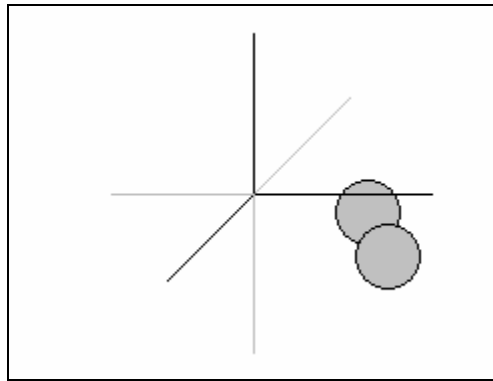
1. **Summary/Reference:** you might work with a summarized piece of an essay, or a reference to a fact or incident in an essay. For example, one might give a quotation that defines knowledge workers and then say “The employees of Monsanto are knowledge workers because you need a lot of education to do genetic engineering.” Working with summary/reference is weak, because it risks textual irresponsibility. After all, a summary is a gloss—it doesn’t have all the details. In terms of thinking, it takes less thinking to mention a reference than it does to prove it through the actual words of the essay.
2. **Concepts:** you may take a term or concept from an essay. For example, you give a quotation about the advancement of farming from Pollan and then say “This meme has evolved from conventional to biotech farming.” Referring to “meme” or “social sector” or something like that brings a concept from one essay over to another essay. In this sense it’s like connecting summary, but since you’re referencing an *idea* from one essay, it shows a little more critical thinking. After all, you have to figure out how the idea applies to the second essay. Again, though, it’s not as strong as bringing in the actual text, which provides the details of the concept that will help you show how it applies in this instance.
3. **Initial set-up:** This is slightly stronger than simply using a concept. In this usage, you open your paper, perhaps, with a paragraph that uses quotation to define or “set-up” a concept. For example, you start with a paragraph that defines “meme” with text from Blackmore and gives a Blackmore quotation that also gives an example of a meme. Then, in the rest of the paper, you “deploy” this concept by using it. Unlike type two, you root the concept in text, but you do this once only. The fact that the concept is initially defined through text makes it strong; the fact that you don’t provide further textual evidence when you go to apply the concept makes it weak.
4. **Inter-paragraph quotations:** you might discuss quotations from an author in one paragraph and then discuss quotations from a second author in the next paragraph. The connection is made *between* the paragraphs, often by referring back to the idea or the example in the first paragraph. This is a bit stronger than simply referencing the text as happens in types one and two. But, because the actual text of each essay remains separated by the distance of the actual paragraphs, it’s harder to see the connection, let alone prove it.
5. **Intra-paragraph quotations:** this is the “classic” connection that moves from a quotation from one essay to a quotation from another essay within one paragraph. What makes it stronger is that the connection is more *immediate*—just having both pieces of text right there helps us see it. It also shows much more skills with critical thinking. It’s easy to say “a Monsanto employee is a knowledge worker,” but it takes more thinking to work that out through the texts of both essays. When working with connection, this is a *very* good kind of “what” to aim for. While the other “what”’s may have a place in a paper, two or three of *this* kind will push your paper into the passing range. With the others, that may still be possible, but it’s not nearly as sure.

6. **Extended intra-paragraph quotations:** this is even stronger, because it not only shows critical thinking but also confidence and authority. An extended intra-paragraph use of quotation is one that “re-uses” pieces of one text while talking about another. The actual *phrases* of the quotation are applied in the analysis. That takes a good deal of thinking, to be sure. And it also shows that *you* have a command of the text, as well as its ideas. This is the kind of quotation work we saw in the sample paper I handed out.

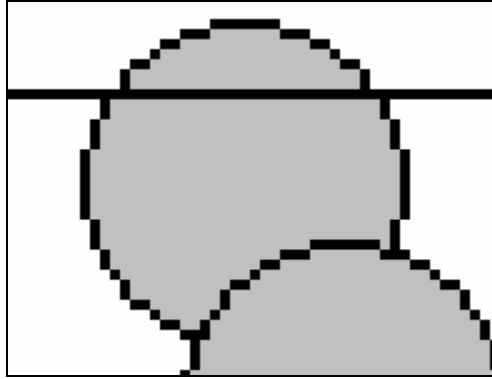
In short, the more closely you work with the text, the stronger the connection is. That's because the more closely you work with the text, the *clearer* it is just what you want to prove, and the stronger the proof is itself. Let's go back to our three-dimensional diagram. In the first four “what”'s above, the actual connection looks something like this:



The *actual* essay is not brought into relation. When you use summary or reference or set-up a concept early on and then just carry it around, you're really just moving a *shadow* of the actual essay. Yes, that's a connection, but notice what type five does:



When you work with quotation, when you bring two quotations together, you are moving the *actual* essays into relation—the use of text makes them touch. Of course, when you do extended intra-paragraph work, the relationship between the essays is even more sharply defined:



It's like seeing the relationship close up, in full detail. The thinking that goes on here shows the small intricacies of the relationship. The thinking, in short, is VERY strong.

We've been calling this the "what" of connection so far. But suddenly I imagine classroom conversations reminiscent of Abbott and Costello (Who's on What? What's the What? What what is where?). I'm tempted to call this the "matter" of the connection, but again I can't see myself asking "What's the matter in this paragraph?" <g>. So, let's call this the *substance* of the connection. In class, we will talk about **summary substance**, **conceptual substance**, **set-up substance**, **inter-paragraph quotation**, **intra-paragraph quotation**, and **extended intra-paragraph**.

#### **The How:**

Connection, as a movement, needs something to be moved (the substance) but it also needs a direction to describe the particular movement, the "how." Let's get the language problem out of the way right up front. We'll call the "how" of a connection its *vector*.

Just as there many kinds of substances for connection, there are many kinds of vectors as well. The strength of these vectors is not built-in; rather, you need to decide which vector to use to pursue which part of your project.

Some common vectors are:

1. **Vector of Example:** the substance/quotations is/are used to name a concept from one essay and give an example of it from another. Think of our Monsanto/knowledge worker example here. The "knowledge worker" is a concept from Drucker. When you connect it to the employees of Monsanto, the movement or vector of the connection is towards example.
2. **Vector of Refutation:** the substance/quotations is/are used to refute an idea or claim from one essay with an idea or claim from another. For example, you could write a paragraph in which you argue that although Drucker claims that knowledge workers own their knowledge, Pollan shows that organic farmers (who can be seen as knowledge workers) are having their knowledge capital taken from them and built into the New Leaf potatoes. The movement here is to refute a claim of one essay by evidence given by another essay.
3. **Vector of Confirmation:** the substance/quotations is/are used to confirm an idea or claim from one essay with an idea or claim from another. You might confirm Drucker's claim that knowledge workers are on the rise by using what Pollan says

about the rise of biotech crops. The movement is to reinforce or confirm a claim from one essay by using ideas from a second essay.

4. **Vector of Complication:** the substance/quotations is/are used to complicate an idea or claim from one essay with an idea or claim from another. You might think of this vector as an advanced combination of refutation and confirmation. That is, you aren't out to simply refute an idea by proving it incorrect; instead, you modify the idea given the insight provided by another essay. For example, you could have a paragraph in which you modify Drucker's idea of the social sector by using what Pollan says about the environmental pollution potential of biotech crops. You wouldn't be saying the social sector is "wrong" or "useless" but instead that it has limitations in solving the problems of the knowledge society. The concept, in short, needs to be modified, complicated. The movement here is to complicate a concept from one essay by using the ideas or events of another essay.
5. **Vector of Application:** the substance/quotations is/are applied to the other essay. This vector resembles the Vector of Example, but, like complication, it is more advanced. For example, in a recent paper, someone argued that the social sector, with its emphasis on human health and well being, could serve as the antidote to memes, which are only concerned with themselves. In this case, the author applied the idea of the social sector to Blackmore's essay. The movement here is to apply a concept from one essay to the concepts or problems of another essay.

Remember that the vector—the direction of the connection, what you want it to achieve—is *fully independent* of the substance. For all of the above examples, you can pursue that vector with inter-paragraph or extended intra-paragraph quotation use. The strength of the overall connection is dependent on **both** these factors: what you're connecting (substance) and how you're connecting it (vector).

Also, keep in mind that these are only *some* of the possible vectors. A vector is, more simply, what you want to do with the connection, so the number of vectors is limited only by what you want to prove.

#### **False Connections:**

There are, however, false vectors and substances. These look like connections, but no connection is actually made. You want to avoid these as much as possible. Such false connections include:

1. **The Implied Connection:** this paragraph will have quotations from both authors, but no explanation of *how* they connect. Therefore, while it has solid substance, it has no direction, no vector at all. One good way to detect this kind of false connection is to look at the end of the paragraph. It usually ends with either the second quotation (no explanation) or with a summary or restatement of that second quotation (no explanation of the relation to the first quotation).
2. **The Mismatched Connection:** this paragraph will have a clear vector, something the author wants to prove in the paragraph, but the substance chosen doesn't match the vector. Often, you'll be choosing poor quotations that don't say what you want them to say. Substance is there (through quotation); vector is there (through explanation). But the two are not working together. To detect this kind of false connection, you want to look at the substance (usually quotation) and then look at the final claim of the paragraph. You want to make sure that what you're trying to do is supported by the text you've chosen.

3. **The Parallel Connection:** this paragraph will *look* like an intra-paragraph connection. It has quotations from both authors, but it never discusses the relation between the two. Instead, it sets up a relation of parallelism. For example, you might write a paragraph in which you set out Petroski's approach to failure and then Pollan's approach to failure. But unless you discuss the *relation* between these approaches to failure, no connection is being made. Instead, you're just pointing to what each author believes. A good way to check for this kind of false connection is to look at the end of the paragraph. Does it mention the relation between the two connections, or does it only mention one author? You can also look within the paragraph. Check to see how you move from one author to another. Phrases like "on the other hand" are a dead give away: if I have one essay on this hand, and the other essay on the other hand, then there is not connection because they're in different hands.
4. **The Imaginary Conversation:** to be honest, this is a true connection, but it sounds particularly weak. In this kind of connection, the author writes as though the authors of the two essays were having an imaginary conversation. Look for phrases like "So-and-so would say" or "So-and-so would disagree." In fact, if you find yourself writing about what one author would do or would say to another author, then you're setting up an imaginary conversation between them. Remember, *you* are making the connection. The connection isn't there, nor is it something Pollan and Drucker are making. Rephrase these connections to make your agency, and your critical thinking, clear.
5. **The Logjammed Connection:** these paragraphs will have *too much* substance. Rather than using quotation, it tends to just *have* quotation—and a lot of it. These paragraphs may have several short quotations from one essay. There's so much text in the paragraph that it's hard to see any vector at all. These paragraphs are easy to spot: look for multiple instances of quotation in one paragraph. Generally speaking, one quotation from each author is all that's needed to make a connection. When you have quotation in excess of that, things start getting murky.

And, of course, there are those paragraphs that seem to have no connection at all. These paragraphs may be working with set-up substance that's positioned way at the start of the paper or they may be part of an inter-paragraph connection. But, if your paragraph has no connection at all, you need to ask yourself why it's in your paper. Remember that connections are the proof for projects, so each paragraph should somehow function in relation to your project.

### **Telling Them Apart:**

I tried to give you *some* indication of how to tell the difference between false and true connections. But, here's an even better rule of thumb: focus on the explanation. That's why the explanation of the connection is so crucial. Look back at your graded papers. Where do I tend to write comments? At the end of a paragraph. Why? Because that's usually where you will be explaining the connection—it's where I look for the vector.

The quality of a connection, its clarity, is determined by the way in which it is explained. It's the explanation which reveals the vector. The substance is easy enough to see: is there quotation or not? Is there concept or not? But if the vector isn't clear, if we can't see the *direction* of the connection and what it's supposed to accomplish, then we can't see the connection at all.

**Examples:**

**For homework, read through the sample paragraphs I'll be handing out to the class. We'll be discussing the connections these paragraphs make.**

To help you do this homework, think about two things as you read each paragraph:

1. Connection is a movement *between* so first identify the substance, the "what." Does it use summary? Quotation? Extended quotation?
2. Connection is a movement *with direction* so then identify the vector, the "how." Is the connection clearly explained? And is it clear from that explanation what the author wants this connection to do?

**Methods to Making:**

This is all good and well and after the fact, I know. It's easy to pick apart a connection, perhaps, but *how do you make one to start with?*

Depending on the method you use to locate your argument/project, there will be two general methods:

1. Start with the project and work your way back to the essays: You know what you want to accomplish in the paper and you've articulated it in your project. Now take a moment and break your project down into little pieces. If you want to prove this whole thing, what's the first thing you should prove? And the second? And then? For each little step of the project that needs to be pursued, think about the essays and how they can be used together to prove that piece. Then look for quotations that will allow you to make the actual connections.
2. Start with the essays and work your way towards a project: Make a list of every idea you can possibly find in both essays. Then, reflect on these two lists. Don't just look for what they have in common (remember, the connection is NOT there waiting for you to discover it). Instead, think about how you can relate the different ideas. Does one idea confirm another? Can you complicate one idea with something from the other essay? Can you apply an idea? Make a list of all the relationships you seen between the ideas of the essays. Then look for the connection between these connections—that's one way to locate an argument.

**Methods to Putting it Together:**

So how does all this end up as a paragraph? Think about some general movement like this:

1. Open the paragraph with a sentence that gives at least some indication of the vector you're pursuing. In other words, the first sentence should indicate what the paragraph is about, what it will prove, and/or how it functions in relation to the project. Recall "topic sentence" or "thesis" when you were learning about paragraphs. That's what this is.
2. Then you move into the substance of your connection for this paragraph. Introduce the quotations or concepts you want to use.

3. Finally, *you explain the connection you're making*. This is your vector. This tells me how you are bringing the substances of the connection into relation. This also tells me how this connection helps you pursue the project.

### **Methods to Improve:**

The language we've developed here of substance and vector can also help you revise connections you already have. First look to see if you have any of the "false connections." Remember that these often reveal themselves towards the end of the paragraph, in the weakness of the explanation of the connection. Then look through each paragraph and ask yourself what kind of substance you're using. Can you make it stronger by moving towards extended intra-paragraph quotation use? Then look at your vectors. Have you made clear how you want to relate these substances and how that relates to your project?

### **Supplement One:**

Quotation types. We covered this in class, but here's a handout I gave to a class years ago. The essays won't be familiar to you, and I guess my general approach to connection is a bit less militaristic these days, but you should still be able to use it as a reference sheet:

#### *BOOT CAMP*

I want to start by extending, for the moment, the "war" metaphor which has guided many of the essays we have read so far. In this "war of words," evidence is the weapon, though evidence is at the same time part of the territory each party wants to conquer. Your minds are another spoil of this war. But unlike many wars, you are not mere civilian casualties, since in being in this classroom you have stepped onto the front lines. In your papers you wage part of this war, and today we will make sure you are properly armed to defend yourselves, or to take the offensive.

One of Sokal's bombshells he drops on his own article is that the editors of *Social Text* "felt no need to analyze the quality of the evidence, the cogency of the arguments, or even the relevance of the arguments to the purported conclusion" (64). As your drill instructor, that's precisely my job in evaluating your papers, so today we will focus on "the quality of evidence," one of Sokal's primary concerns as well. Specifically, we will focus on the different ways to use quotation as evidence.

#### *QUOTE TYPE ONE: DAMAGE, MINIMAL*

The most basic way to use quotation is simply to make a statement which summarizes or defines or repeats an author's position. For example, look at the way Martin uses Marx:

Marcellino is doing critical theory in the sense specified by Marx in 1843: "The self-clarification of the struggles and wishes of the age" (quoted in Fraser, 1989, 113). (69)

This quotation from Marx doesn't prove anything. What does it do?

Take a look at another example from Martin:

Individual feelings were an inadequate measure of the social good. There was a total distrust of "untutored" human nature and a desire for the complete control of "wayward human experience" (Ross 1991, 368-69). (70)

What does this quotation do, and how do you think these type of quotes can help you in battle? For more examples, review Martin's section on identity politics.

*QUOTE TYPE TWO: DAMAGE, HEAVY*

Another way to use quotation in this war is to make connections, clearly one of the major battle strategies of the 103 pedagogy. At times, this type of quotation use may seem to blur into type one. Indeed, many times you may want to use a type one quotation to set up for the kill that comes with the type two. Another example from Martin:

The economy is expanding because the wealthiest 40 percent get 68 percent of the income, creating consumer power to keep companies in business but leaving 60 percent of the population unable to participate (Peterson 1994). This helps explain why many people feel as if they are living through a depression. As an example, there is the family with three children who between them hold four jobs but make only \$18,000 a year (Johnson 1994). "When it was noted that two million new jobs were created last year, the husband quickly put that statistic in perspective. 'Sure, we've got four of them. So what?'" (Herbert 1994). (75-6)

What does this kind of quote do for an argument? What does it do for Martin here? What does it do in your paper? What don't the essays we read have more of this type of weapon?

*QUOTE TYPE THREE: DAMAGE, SEVERE*

The most powerful way to use quotation is to analyze it. This weaponry is often referred to as "close reading." Terry Eagleton explains a little about close reading:

meant detailed analytic interpretation, providing a valuable antidote to aestheticist chit-chat; but it also seemed to imply that every previous school of criticism had read only an average of three words per line. To call for close reading, in fact, is to do more than insist on due attentiveness to the text. It inescapably suggests an attention to this rather than to something else: to the "words on the page" rather than to the contexts which produced and surround them. It implies a limiting as well as a focusing of concern--a limiting badly needed by literary talk which would ramble comfortably from the texture of Tennyson's language to the length of his beard. But in dispelling such anecdotal irrelevancies, "close reading" also held at bay a good deal else: it encouraged the illusion that any piece of language, "literary" or not, can be adequately studied or even understood in isolation. It was the beginnings of a "reification" of the literary work, the treatment of it as an object in itself, which was to be triumphantly consummated in the American New Criticism. (44)

Subsequent armies of criticism have refined close reading. Poststructuralism called for an attention to the lacunae, or the gaps, in a text--paying close attention not only to what was

said but also to what was not said. New Historicism placed the text back into its historical context and used close reading to read the society that surrounded and produced the text.

We can see close reading in all of our essays so far. Take, for example, Tompkins:

My research began with Perry Miller. Early in the preface to *Errand into the Wilderness*, while explaining how he came to write his history of the New England mind, Miller writes a sentence that stopped me dead. He says that what fascinated him as a young man about his country's history was "the massive narrative of movement of European culture into the vacant wilderness of America." "Vacant?" Miller, writing in 1956, doesn't pause over the word "vacant," but to people who read his preface thirty years later, the word is shocking. In what circumstances could someone proposing to write a history of colonial New England not take account of the Indian presence there? (125)

The attack is swift and decisive, as Tompkins uses a single word from the quotation to launch her offensive, reflecting New Historicist and Poststructuralist uses of close reading in paying attention to what Miller did not see (Poststructuralism) and how that omission related to his place in history (New Historicism). And this analysis feeds directly into her argument. What kind of damage does this kind of evidence weapon do?

For Martin, can you recall any times she used close reading? What was the effect? What did it do for her battle? Even Foucault uses close reading, in his obtuse explanation of the shogun and sailor story.

This particular weapon is not just postmodern in nature. How and where does Sokal use this weapon of close reading to indict his own essay? What kind of quotation does he tend to use in "Transgressing the Boundaries"?

When you work on your rough drafts, be conscious of what weapons you choose to use. Also keep in mind that no one weapon will win a war. Strategize how best to use these kinds of evidence in combination.

### **Supplement Two:**

Finally, here's the Super Secret Formula, extended version. Following this pattern can help you make a solid intra-paragraph connection. Using the extension exercise can move you towards extended intra-paragraph work and will also help you avoid The Mismatched Connection:

*Barclay's Super-Secret Formula for Connection:*

**Connection = CI+I+Q1+E+T+Q2+Ce**

Where:

- **CI** = Start by stating your claim, what you are trying to prove.
- **I** = Then introduce the first quotation.
- **Q1** = Give the first quotation.

- **E** = Explain it in your own words.
- **T** = Give some sort of transition to the next quotation, providing a clue to connection.
- **Q2** = Give the second quote.
- **Ce** = Explain how the second quote connects to the first one in a sentence or two. This last part is crucial. You need to explain the connection in order to really prove it.

*Barclay's Connection Supplement, or "Nail That Connection!"*

This is a useful exercise to make sure that the CE of your connection, the place at the end where you explain the connection between the two quotations, matches up with the quotations you've actually chosen. I know I've commented on some papers recently that you're making an explanation that doesn't come out of the quotations. If I've written that on your paper, this is most especially for you. But this is a great exercise for everyone, since it makes your connections sharper, stronger, and slicker.

1. Select the two quotations you think make a connection.
2. Take a sheet of paper and draw a line down the middle, from top to bottom.
3. Write each quotation on the paper, on either side of the line, so that you can actually see the two pieces of text next to one another.
4. Underline the phrases in each quotation that you think actually connect and then draw a line connecting them.
5. At the bottom of the sheet, write a sentence in which you explain the connection using each of those phrases.
6. Use this sentence to create your CE.
7. Repeat for the next connection.

The idea is that you not only get to see the pieces of text next to each other, which helps you see the connection, but you also refer directly to the quotations as you explain the connection, and to the exact pieces of the quotation that actually connect. If you can't find phrases that connect in each quote, then perhaps you should choose some better quotes. If you need to explain the quote for a few sentences before you can make the connection, then there's probably a better quotation you can use. Go find it.