



outside resources you might have to strengthen your case. This strategy will serve many purposes. First, it will make it easier to find the order in which you wish to make your points. You can shuffle the papers around and find out which points are closely related and where your easiest transitions will be.

Planning can make writing the body move along much faster. You can avoid losing your train of thought by searching page after page for that one perfect quotation, because you will already have the page and line numbers (for poetry) written down on your paper. Planning can also aid you in avoiding digressions.

With an outline, you can save yourself the trouble of writing an entire paper only to find out that from the guidelines is that your paper may give the reader the impression that you weren't capable of completing the assignment, so you made up one of your own. If you are unsure of whether or not you are staying within the guidelines, or there simply are none, it might help to take your outline or ideas to the professor or even to the WaLC and seek some input there.

### The Narrator v. The Author

This is a very common mistake. The narrator is not necessarily the author, even if the text is written in the first person. An autobiography is the only instance where you should assume that they are the same person. Although it is true that the narrator, as well as other characters, may be based on the author, the author should be treated as entirely separate from the narrator and all other persons appearing in the work. When the narrator has a name, which is usually the case when a text is written in the first person, refer to him/her by name. If the narrator does not have

### The Reader v. Your Professor

This is another common mistake, because, technically, the reader is your professor. You should try to eliminate this association, because it will not benefit your paper (or the grade you get on that paper) at all. When writing a literature paper, you should assume that your audience is not overly familiar with the work(s) you are discussing. You could pretend that you are writing for a *Screaming Tree*. Imagine that the readers of the *Screaming Tree* are literate people who have heard of the work you are discussing but have not necessarily read it, or have read it but do not remember it well. You should, therefore, give as much background

story in its entirety, however, because you will bore those who are familiar with it. Give just enough information to make your points.

### Quotations

Writing a literature paper is the complete opposite of writing a research paper in one large her aspects that make the two opposite, but we're not talking about them right now.

**In a research paper, quoting is generally discouraged and paraphrasing is preferred.**

**In a literature paper, paraphrasing is generally discouraged and quoting is preferred.**

Quotations strengthen your arguments and work as hardcore evidence. To use the Wife of Bath example, saying, "Somewhere on page 160, the Wife of Bath says that she really likes having sex



## The Single Most Important Piece of Advice You Will Ever Receive

When choosing a work to write a literature paper on, do not choose a work that you do not know or get help from your professor.