

United States Army
Intelligence Center of Excellence
(USAICoE)

Enhancing Your
Intelligence Writing
Writing Guide for
USAICoE and U.S. Army Writing



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Chapter 1 – Introduction

The US Army requires Soldiers to write clear, concise documents understood in a “single, rapid reading.” This often asks the Soldier to be familiar with the AR 25-50, the Federal Plain Language Guidelines, and academic requirements for the coursework. Soldiers must also adapt their writing style for the audiences reading their work, which include members of their MOS and instructors.

You, the soldier, will be asked to analyze and argue many different topics. How you research and write about that topic is all up to you, but when you need help, this guide is there for you.

1-1. Who else is available to help?

- a. The USAICoE Writing Program has made this guide available to all USAICoE Soldiers through the CW2 Christopher G. Nason Military (MI) Library at https://intellibrary.libguides.com/_writing.
- b. There are also several helpful videos on common writing issues that you might struggle with. They are available at <https://libcoe.army.mil>.

1-2. And Now to Start Writing

Before you begin there are a few things you need to know about the Army writing.

The standard guides are the AR 25-50 and the Federal Plain Language Guide, but you will also write according to what your instructors require, so these are guides for you. This little gem of a guidebook is here to help when you struggle with these skills, but it is up to you to seek writing help when it is needed.

Most of the essays or documents you write will require the five following criteria:

- a. Active voice is important, and you need to be familiar with what it means.
- b. Write accurately, with few or no grammar, spelling, wording, formatting, and other errors.
- c. Write with concision – which means clear, short, easily understood sentences.
- d. Make sure you have a BLUF (Bottom Line Up Front) – what do you want the reader to take away from your document, what is the purpose of your essay.
- e. Analyze or argue – the requirement for this will depend on the type of document you are writing. A report will analyze, a battle analysis may argue, always ask your instructor if you are unclear what you are writing.

1-3. Extras you need to know

Most army writing will require either Arial 12-point font or Times New Roman 12-point font. The margins of your paper will be one-inch margins on all sides. You will be asked to write in either APA or Chicago style. If you are unfamiliar with either the Purdue Owl website is an excellent resource at

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html.

1-4. Importance

Writing is an important part of the Intelligence community. Intelligence professionals will be asked to find and process large volumes of information, analyze the information to develop intelligence, and communicate their findings effectively. Good intelligence writing provides information to readers who will be making decisions based on that information.

Your goal is to write as an Intelligence professional. This means using the AR 25-50, and instructor guidance, when writing any document. There are three things to think about when writing:

- a. You need to establish the purpose for your essay. Why did you choose the topic that you did? What do you want the reader to gain by reading it?
- b. Make your point as quickly, clearly, and as easily recognizable as possible.
- c. Follow the expectations of the U.S. Army, and, if asked, academic writing.

This diagram shows the overlap between the three most common types of writing within USAICoE.



Figure 1-1. USAICoE Writing Standard Diagram.

- d. Lastly, be adaptable. You might find writing challenging, or you might find the assignment itself challenging. You may need to modify your way of thinking to accomplish the task asked of you. You may struggle with research, writing, or organization, and someone is there to help.

1-5. One Last Thing – Do the Research.

Library Resources – The Library is your first friend

While it may be tempting to begin a research project online due to the sheer volume of research available on the internet, having a conversation with a librarian may be more useful. Advantages to consulting librarians include:

- a. Help in narrowing a research project appropriate for the assignment
- b. Full knowledge and expertise in local inventory within the library
- c. Awareness of interlibrary loan and subscriptions for materials outside the library
- d. Expertise in internet research, as well as ability to validate the reliability of sources
- e. Institutional visibility and connection to academic assistance programs for students who are struggling
- f. Expertise in study habits, research methods, and note taking systems
- g. Access to computer labs, microfilm, microfiche, film, DVD, and electronic media

In short, collaboration with a Librarian at the start of a project is likely to save time and energy.

Second to contacting a librarian, consulting a professional research guide or database is a solid initial step in the research process, particularly if students already know the topic for their research project or have narrowed down their research question.

Locally, librarians at the CW2 Christopher G. Nason MI Library at Ft. Huachuca (or Nason Library, for short) have created a professional research guide for USAICoE students. Their research guide covers frequently assigned topics of interest, such as terrorist and insurgent groups, political and military history, weapon platforms, trafficking, cyber, and more. Students can find their guide at <http://intellibrary.libguides.com/home>.

***Note—After researching the topic, you must figure out how to include and integrate it into your essay. Make sure you understand the basic techniques for integrating sources otherwise your paper will end up with plagiarism, and that is never a good thing.**

Chapter 2 – Standard 1: Voice–Active vs Passive

2-1. Voice

Voice refers to who or what is performing the action. In active voice sentences, the subject is performing the action. In passive voice sentences, the subject passively receives the action of the verb. The common English sentence convention is subjects coming before the verb, and the verb coming before the objects.

AR 25-50, page 6, identifies the importance of distinguishing between active and passive voice.

2-2. Active Voice

Why active voice is preferred over passive voice:

- a. 1. Active voice emphasizes the actor of the sentence.
- b. 2. Active voice puts the actor before the verb
- c. 3. Active voice often creates shorter sentences
- d. 4. Active voice often helps the reader understand the main point

Instructors will look at how much of the paper is in active or passive voice and note if it interferes with the clarity of the assignment.

2-3. Preference

The U.S. Army prefers active voice rather than passive, especially in correspondence. Unless otherwise informed, write in active voice. You should only use passive voice when there is a strong reason.

2-4. Difference

So, WHAT is the difference between Active and Passive voice?

The simple definition of active voice is the subject of a sentence performs the verb's action, but what does this look like?

AR 25-50 recommends using simple sentences with a clear subject (Actor), an active verb (Action), and a descriptive object (Receiver).

Examples of active voice:

- Example - Soldiers adore free doughnuts.
- Explanation - Soldiers (subject) adore (verb) free doughnuts (object).

- Example - 2LT Ripley chased the dog.
- Explanation – 2LT Ripley (subject) chased (verb) the dog (object).

In both examples it is noted that the “soldiers” and “2LT Ripley” are the ones doing the action to the object.

The simple definition of passive voice is when the subject of the sentence is acted on by the verb. Passive voice uses different forms of the verb “to be” (am, is, was, were, are, or been) before the past participle (verb forms ending in -d or -ed) of the sentences main verb. However, this is not always the case, so be aware of this when writing. To add to the confusion, passive voice does not mean past tense.

Examples of passive voice:

- Example - Free doughnuts are adored by Soldiers.
- Explanation – Free doughnuts (object) are adored (verb) by Soldiers (subject).

- Example - The dog was chased by 2LT Lawrence.
- Explanation – The dog (object) was chased (verb) by 2LT Lawrence (subject).

In both examples, note that the “free doughnuts” and “the dog” are the object and something is being done to them.

2-5. Okay, but how can Passive voice be changed to Active?

If you have several passive voice sentences, you need to change them to active voice. Then the question becomes how do you change passive voice to active voice?

There are several ways to change passive to active voice, and it all depends on how the sentence is written.

Examples:

- Example - Passive – The report was submitted by SGT Awesome.
- Example - Active – SGT Awesome submitted the report.
- Explanation – SGT Awesome (subject) submitted (verb) the report (object).*

***This now follows the active voice format.**

- Example - Passive – The exam was failed by 44% of the soldiers.
- Example - Active – Forty-four percent of the Soldiers failed the exam.*

***Note this sentence also begins with a number, and when beginning a sentence with a number write the number out.**

- Explanation – Forty-four percent of the Soldiers (subject) failed (verb) the exam (object).*

***This now follows the active voice format.**

- Example - Passive – Doughnuts have been discovered in the conference room.
- Example - Active - The Soldiers discovered doughnuts in the conference room.
- Explanation – The Soldiers (subject) discovered (verb) doughnuts (object)

***This now follows the active voice format.**

To change passive voice to active, find the action and who is doing it. Some passive sentences may not identify an actor.

- Examples:
- Example - Passive – A fair resolution to the Physical Training (PT) schedule is being sought.
- Example - Active – The Battalion is seeking a fair resolution to the Physical Training (PT) schedule.

One way to check if a sentence is in active or passive is to use the phrase “By Zombies” next to the verb. If the verb is in active voice it will make it more confusing. If the verb is passive it will make absolute sense.

Original	“By Zombies”	Makes sense?	Conclusion
The door was kicked in.	The door was kicked in...by zombies?	Yes	PASSIVE
The supplies were lost somewhere on the trail.	The supplies were lost...by zombies?	Yes	PASSIVE
The bill for the restaurant was paid before we arrived.	The bill for the restaurant was paid....by zombies?	Yes	PASSIVE

The focus of this chapter is passive voice.	The focus of this chapter is...by zombies?	No	NOT PASSIVE (Sentence Object)
---------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------	----	----------------------------------------

Figure 2-1. By Zombies Chart.

See Johnson, Rebecca, "A scary-easy way to help you find passive voice," Grammarly.com, accessed August 18, 2017, <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/a-scary-easy-way-to-help-you-find-passive-voice/>.

2-6. Shifts that happen in a single sentence

It is possible for a sentence to be both active and passive at the same time if the sentence contains two separate clauses joined with a conjunction. Notice how the second example, without shifts, sounds better.

Example with shifts between passive and active:

- The door was kicked in, and then we entered to secure the area.

Example in Active voice only:

- Our team kicked in the door, and then we entered to secure the area.

Shifts can happen in a complete paragraph as well. You need to watch shifts in single sentences and paragraphs as they often cause confusion for the reader.

2-7. And it's okay to use Passive Voice when?

- a. The actor is unknown – The MRE's were passed out at lunch. (Who passed them out?)
- b. The actor is irrelevant – The beds will be built this evening. (Don't care who builds them)
- c. You are writing about a general truth – Rules are meant to be broken. (by whoever, whenever)
- d. You want to emphasize the person or thing acted on – Dogs were first used in war in 600BC. They are still used today.

2-8. Tips for Revision

The use of passive voice is grammatically correct, but not always the most effective choice. AR 25-50 explicitly instructs to avoid it for correspondence. For other kinds of writing, use it sparingly and with a purpose.

Chapter 3 – Standard 2: Accuracy

This section will be about the mechanics of writing, and there is a lot of information in here. Take breaks, don't try to learn this all at once if you don't already have a clear idea of what accuracy is. Use this section as a guide if you are struggling with the mechanics of writing and need some added help.

What accuracy means is an essay without errors in spelling, punctuation, word usage, and formatting, all of which can cause confusion. Also, if your paper is full of errors you will lose credibility as, not only the writer of the essay, but as the subject-matter expert of the information in the essay.

AR 25-50 states that your work must be free from errors, both grammatical and in regards to the information included. So, accuracy includes a lot. Don't worry though, this guide will go step-by-step through some standard issues among writers.

By the end of this section of the guide, you should be able to write without spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors. Your paper should present all necessary information, and your facts should be correct. You should also be objective in your writing (no personal opinions) and make sure the analysis or argument (depending on the paper) is logical.

Section 1 – Parts of Speech – Let's start here

Standard English Grammar recognizes nine functions for words in sentences, called parts of speech:

Name	Function
Nouns	Describe a person, place, idea, or thing
Pronouns	Replace a noun
Adjectives	Modify nouns
Articles	Mark nouns
Verbs	Describe actions or states of being
Adverbs	Modify a verb, adjective, other adverb
Prepositions	Show relationships of noun or pronoun to other words to form a phrase
Conjunctions	Connect concepts or phrases
Interjections	Interrupt a phrase or make an exclamation

Figure 3-1. Parts of Speech

3-1. Nouns

a. Nouns describe:

A person	CPT Skippy, LT America, GEN Tony Stark
A place	Washington, D.C., Ft. Bragg, Fenway Park
A thing	Rifle, tank, doughnut
A concept	Freedom, Republic, Patriotism

Figure 3-2. Nouns

b. Proper Nouns describe specifics and need capitalization:

Common Noun	Proper Noun
house	The White House
computer	HP Pavilion
globe	The Globe Theater

Figure 3-3. Proper Nouns

3-2. Pronouns

Pronouns take the place of regular nouns.

➤ Example: SGT Casanova has more doughnuts because she took them.

The original noun is the antecedent (SGT Casanova) and the pronoun replacing it is the referent (she).

a. Personal Pronouns

Use a personal pronoun when referring to a specific person, place or thing.

Person	Singular	Plural
First	I	We
Second	You	You
Third	He/She/It/They	They

Figure 3-4. Personal Pronouns

b. Possessive Pronouns

Use possessive pronouns to clarify ownership.

Person	Singular	Plural
First	My, mine	Our, ours
Second	Your, yours	Your, yours
Third	Her, hers, his, its	Their, theirs

Figure 3-5. Possessive Pronouns

c. Intensive and Reflexive Pronouns

Use intensive pronouns to emphasize the actor or another pronoun.

➤ Example: The keynote speaker was the General himself.

Reflexive pronouns identify that the actor is also its recipient.

➤ Example: That guy failed height and weight, but he really got himself in great shape.

Person	Singular	Plural
First	Myself	Ourselves
Second	Yourself	Yourselves
Third	Himself, herself, itself	Themselves

Figure 3-6. Intensive and Reflexive Pronoun

d. Relative and Interrogative Pronouns

Use relative pronouns to introduce phrases or clauses that clarify the noun.

➤ Example: The Soldier who led PT on Tuesday reminded us to stretch first.

Relative Pronouns
Who, Whom, Whose, Which, That

Figure 3-7. Relative Pronouns

Often there is confusion when to use “Whom” and “Who.” You only use “whom” when replacing them, her, or him.

➤ “She’s the instructor whom I met at Basic.” – Correct use of whom

➤ “Who ate all of the doughnuts?” – Correct use of who

e. Demonstrative Pronouns

The pronoun functions as an adjective:

Example:

- This MRE is great.
- That soldier is dehydrated.

Demonstrative Pronouns
This, That, These, Those

Figure 3-8. Demonstrative Pronouns

f. Indefinite Pronouns

Use these pronouns when referring generally to people or things without saying exactly who or what they are.

Example:

- Everybody should show up for weekend drill.
- No one knows who ate all of the doughnuts.

Indefinite Pronouns		
All	Everybody	No one
Another	Everyone	Nothing
Any	Everything	One
Anybody	Few	Several
Anyone	Many	Some
Anything	Neither	Somebody
Both	Nobody	Someone
Each	None	Something
Either		

Figure 3-9. Indefinite Pronouns

g. Reciprocal Pronouns

Use reciprocal pronouns to refer back to plural nouns (antecedents).

➤ Example: You need to take care of each other in combat.

Reciprocal Pronouns
Each other, One another

Figure 3-10. Reciprocal Pronouns

3-3. Adjectives

Adjectives clarify or describe nouns.

Below is a table with three questions for adjectives and examples based on this sentence: CPT Magneto bought a yellow Fiat two months ago.

Clarifying Question	Example
What kind of?	CPT Magneto bought a Fiat.
Which one?	The yellow one.
How many?	Only one.

Figure 3-11. Questions for Adjectives

3-4. Articles

Articles define a noun as specific or non-specific (specific – the truck, non-specific – a truck).

To match the correct article, you must first find the noun. A noun is a person, place, thing, or idea. However, not all nouns require an article. Some nouns refer to things or ideas that you cannot count or make plural, such as rice or generosity.

A, An	The	Difference
I spoke to a commanding officer.	I spoke to the commanding officer.	Speaking to someone with the rank vs. a specific superior
He was eating an apple.	He was eating the apple.	Having one (of many) vs. the only one
That wasn't just an Abrams—that was the Phantom Tank.		Distinguishes a peculiar instance

Figure 3-12. Articles

3-5. Verbs

Verbs tell you what someone or something is or does.

Examples:

- I ran towards the doughnuts.
- The tanks collided on the base.

Sometimes we use the verb “is” to link or join the subject to another word in the sentence to describe the subject. Examples of these linking verbs are forms of “to be,” verbs that indicate the senses, such as taste, feel, smell, sight, sound, and verbs like become, seem, and appear.

Examples:

- The unit appears ready for inspection.
- The sky looks ominous.

3-6. Adverbs

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They do not modify (describe) nouns. They are the when, where, how, and why in a sentence.

Emotion or movement	happily, fiercely, fluently, carefully (these often end in “-ly”)
Place	somewhere, here, there, far, north
Time	yesterday, late, early, soon
Frequency	never, often, frequently, generally, soon

Figure 3-13. Adverbs

3-7. Prepositions

Prepositions link strings of nouns and pronouns to form prepositional phrases which modify other parts of the sentence. A prepositional phrase can function as an adjective or an adverb:

Adjective Example:

- CPT Picard is the Commanding Officer of the battalion. (CO of what? The battalion.)

Adverb Example:

- MAJ Spock ran through the Santa Rita Mountains. (Ran where? The Santa Rita Mountains.)

A table of the most common prepositions follows.

Common Prepositions					
About	Before	Despite	Near	Past	Toward
Above	Behind	Down	Next	Plus	Under
Across	Below	During	Of	Regarding	Underneath
After	Beside(s)	Except	Off	Respecting	Unlike
Against	Between	For	On	Since	Until
Along	Beyond	From	Onto	Than	Unto
Among	But	In	Opposite	Through	Up
Around	By	Inside	Out	Throughout	Upon
As	Concerning	Into	Outside	Till	With/in/out
At	Considering	Like	Over	To	

Figure 3-14. Common Prepositions

Additionally, some prepositions use multiple words: along with, as well as, in addition to, next to, and rather than.

3-8. Conjunctions

Use conjunctions to connect parts of speech, phrases, and clauses together. They are joining words. There are several types of conjunctions.

Coordinating and Correlative Conjunctions	
Coordinating And, but, or, nor, for, so and yet.	Example He wanted to go to Germany, but he was stationed at Fort Huachuca
Correlative Either/or Neither/nor Not only...but also Whether/or Both...and	Example Either give me liberty or give me death. - Patrick Henry "Neither snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds." -Creed of the U.S. Postal Service

Figure 3-15. Coordinating and Correlative Conjunctions



Section II – Sentence Basics – Now let’s put things together

The parts of speech combine into sentences to create ideas and arguments. This section introduces the two main portions of a sentence: the subject and the predicate as well as how to recognize them.

3-9. Subjects and Predicates

Sentences have two basic parts: the subject and the predicate.

a. Subjects

The part of the sentence that acts on the verb is the subject. The subject is usually the “actor.”

- A complete subject answers the “who” or “what” in a sentence, including modifiers.
- A predicate is the verb plus any sentence objects, complements, and modifiers.

Below is an example of a sentence with the subject and predicate.

Subject	Predicate
The Instructor	told me to drink more water.

Figure 3-16. Subject

Who told him to drink more water? The Instructor

(1) Multiple Subjects

Some sentences use two subjects split by a conjunction.

Note: using multiple subjects will change the form of the verb.

Subject				Predicate
	SS		SS	
Every	Soldier	and	Civilian	will write reports.

Figure 3-17. Multiple Subjects

(2) Understood Subjects

Some sentences, such as commands (imperatives) do not need to include a word for the subject. These sentences will include only the predicate of the sentence.

Subject	Predicate
[You]	Get to the chopper!
[You]	Clean up that mess.

Figure 3-18. Understood Subjects

The use of an understood subject is more common in speaking than in writing.

(3) Subject/Verb (S/V)

The simplest form of a sentence includes the subject and a verb:

Subject	Verb
I	ran.

Figure 3-19. Subject/Verb

Use this format to answer short, direct questions.

b. Subject/Verb/Direct Object (S/V/DO)

This combination is the most common sentence structure. The subject functions as the actor. The recipient of that action is the direct object.

Subject		Transitive Verb	Direct Object		
	SS		Receiver		
CPT	Vader	ate	the	whole	MRE.

Figure 3-20. Subject/Verb/ Direct Object

Note that "the whole" modifies the receiver in this sentence, "MRE." If stuck, mentally remove the unnecessary words to locate the DO, which is always a noun or pronoun.

Unlike linking verbs, transitive verbs describe action rather than states of being.

3-10. Phrases and Clauses – Only the important stuff

a. Phrases

A phrase is a group of related words, but it does NOT contain both a subject and a predicate. As a reminder, the predicate is the part of a sentence that says something about the subject.

Examples of phrases are:

- on the bus
- after the war
- to their beds

Some grammar books recommend avoiding ending sentences with a preposition, but if the sentence is clear, ignore this advice. For example, compare the following sentences and the location of the prepositions. While technically correct, leading with a prepositional phrase can make the sentence less clear and sound pretentious:

Examples:

- For what are you waiting? (Correct, but awkward)
- What are you waiting for? (Ends in preposition)

b. Clauses

A clause contains both a subject and a predicate. A clause can be either a part of a sentence or an entire sentence. It is a group of words with its own subject and verb. An independent clause can stand on its own as a complete thought. Unfinished ideas can't stand alone, so we call them dependent clauses. They depend on more information to make sense.

The Clause	
Independent	It can stand on its own as a complete sentence
Dependent (Subordinate)	Is an unfinished thought, depends on an independent clause to make sense

Figure 3-21. The Clause

(1) Independent Clause

Whenever you are evaluating a sentence, to be sure it is complete or to determine if you have an independent clause, look for these three things:

- (i) A subject (that makes sense with the verb)
- (ii) A verb (that goes with the subject)
- (iii) A complete thought

(2) Dependent Clause

While a dependent clause also has a self-contained subject, verb, and predicate, it functions in the sentence as an adjective, adverb, or noun. A dependent clause does not make a complete thought. If a word group has a subject, verb, and predicate but is not a complete idea, it is a dependent clause.

Dependent Clause	Substitutes or Answers	Look for:	Examples (Clauses are in <i>italics</i>)
Noun	Replaces subject, subject complement, direct object, or object of a preposition	Relative Pronouns: which, who, whom, whose Other Pronouns: what, whatever, whichever, whoever, whomever Other Subordinating Words: how, if, that, when, whenever, where, wherever, whether, why	Mick Jagger argued that you can't always get what you want.
Adjective	Which one? What kind of?	Relative Pronouns: that, which, who, whom, whose Relative Adverbs: when, where, why	The Drill Sergeant often works with Soldiers who would appreciate a little more down time.
Adverb	When? Where? Why? How?	Subordinating Conjunctions: after, although, as, as if, because, before, even though, if, in order that, since, so that, than, that, though, unless, until, when, where, whether, while	In order for us to make chow, we double-timed the march.

Figure 3-22. The Dependent Clause

Section III – Now that we can write a sentence, let's talk grammar... YAY!

This section covers the most frequent problem areas of grammar: Agreement of Subject and Verb.

3-11. Agreement of Subject and Verb

Subjects come in two forms: singular and plural. In addition to identifying the subject of a sentence, it is necessary to identify the right verb conjugation. If the subject is singular, then the verb should be as well. If the subject is plural, so is the verb.

Examples:

- The Soldier is available for counseling. (singular)
- The Soldiers are available for counseling. (plural)

3-12. Comma Usage

Commas are possibly the most problematic issues in writing, either they are used too often, or not enough, and no one seems to know when either of those limits are. Here are some rules to follow when using the mysterious comma.

- a. Use commas to separate three or more words, phrases, or clauses written in a series.
 - Example – The office promised leave time, good food, and money.
- b. Use commas to separate independent clauses when they are joined by any of these seven coordinating conjunctions: and, but, for, or, nor, so, yet
 - Example - I have run the entire ten miles, but I can probably run more.
- c. Use commas after introductory clauses, phrases, or words that come before the main clause.
 - Example – While I was eating, a Soldier knocked on the barracks door.
- d. Use a pair of commas in the middle of a sentence to set off clauses, phrases, or words that are not necessary to the meaning of the sentence. If these words are dropped, the sentence will still make sense and keep its basic meaning.
 - Example – I am, as you probably noticed, an excellent Intelligence Officer.
- e. Use commas to separate two or more adjectives that describe the same noun when the word “and” can be inserted between them.
 - Example – They are strong, healthy soldiers. (They are strong “and” healthy soldiers)
- f. Use commas to set off geographical names, items in dates, addresses, and titles in names.

Examples:

- I lived in San Diego, California, for 35 years.
 - Steve joined the Army on May 28, 2020.
 - Shelley lives at 2089 Paseo Gato, in Sierra Vista, Arizona.
 - Jack Ripper, M.D., was my family doctor.
- g. Use commas to separate direct quotes from the rest of the sentence.

Examples:

- Smith asked, “Do we really have to run five miles?”
- “Yes,” answered the drill instructor.
- h. Use commas whenever necessary to prevent possible confusion or misreading.
 - Example – To John, Lincoln was the greatest president.
- i. Use commas before or surrounding the name or title of a person directly addressed.

Examples:

- Will you, Freddy, have the root canal?
- “Yes, Doctor, I will.
- j. Use commas to separate a statement from a question.
 - Example – I can go, can’t I?
- k. Use a comma to separate contrasting parts of a sentence.
 - Example – This is my bunk, not yours.
- l. Use a comma when beginning sentences with introductory words such as well, now, or, yes.
 - Example – Yes, I do need that report.
- m. Use commas surrounding words such as therefore and however when they are used as interrupters.
 - Example – I will be happy, however, to volunteer my time.

3-13. Run-on Fused Sentence

Problems occur when writers merge independent clauses incorrectly. When there are two independent clauses in a sentence, you must connect them with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet), or with a semicolon, colon, or dash. The two types of run-on sentences are the comma-splice and the fused sentence.

a. Comma-Splice

Example (Incorrect): The temperature is high, drink some water. Add a conjunction (and, but, for, nor, yet, or so)

Example (Correct): The temperature is high, so drink some water

b. Fused Sentence

Example (Incorrect): It was 7:25 in the morning Dave and Buster rushed to catch their Uber. Create two sentences. It was 7:25 in the morning. Dave and Buster rushed to catch their Uber.

3-14. Sentence Fragments

A sentence fragment is a word group that looks like a sentence but is missing necessary components. A sentence must include a word group consisting of at least one full independent clause that can stand alone.

➤ Example (Sentence Fragment): When the Soldier shot the rifle. Running for formation. And immediately popped their flares.

➤ Example (Corrected): The Range OIC was surprised when the Soldier shot the rifle. SPC Simons ran for formation. The Pathfinders landed around the downed aircraft and immediately popped their flares.

3-15. Typos

While MS Word and similar word processing programs are powerful tools for drafting and checking documents, they are not perfect. Because of this, there is no substitute for a careful human being checking for errors. You can use a spellchecker, but don't trust it. It will not catch misused words such as too vs to, or than vs then.

3-16. Spelling

Misspelling words is a quick route to damaging your credibility when submitting any type of written work. Recognizing commonly misspelled words is one way to grow your vocabulary. If in doubt, always check an online or hardcopy dictionary.

3-17. Capitalization

There are seven primary rules to capitalization; however, several of these rules include exceptions. Follow course guidelines for specific requirements.

- a. Rule 1. Capitalize the first word in a sentence and in a document.
- b. Rule 2. Capitalize proper nouns and adjectives derived from proper nouns.
 - (1) Proper nouns: Names of specific persons, places, and things. You will also include months, holidays, and days of the week to this list.
 - (2) Adjectives derived from proper nouns: a Russian national, a Victorian building
 - (3) Proper noun examples: Fort Campbell, Field Manual 2-01.3, Motrin.

- c. Rule 3. Capitalize titles of persons only when used as part of a proper name.
 - (4) Professor Quentin Culver, PhD
 - (5) Command Sergeant Major Anthony Whitney
 - (6) Mark Hays, Attorney at Law
 - (7) The professor
 - (8) The sergeant major
 - (9) The lawyer
- d. Rule 4. Capitalize only the major words in titles and subtitles of works such as books, online articles, or documents. Do not capitalize smaller articles such as, a, and, and the unless they are the first word in the title or after a colon.
- e. Rule 5. Capitalize the first word of a quoted sentence. Do not capitalize the first word in a quoted phrase.
- f. Rule 6. Capitalize all of the letters in the abbreviations for departments and agencies of government or any other official organizations: FBI, DEA, USMA, CIOC, CISAC Unique capitalization (AR 25-50, page 6): The following is a selection of style and usage preferences for internal Army correspondence:
 - (10) Capitalize the word “Soldier” when it refers to a U.S. Army Soldier.
 - (11) Capitalize the word “Family” when it refers to U.S. Army Family or Family members.
 - (12) Capitalize the word “Civilian” when it refers to DA Civilians and is used in conjunction with Soldier and/or Family.

3-18. Punctuation

This section covers important punctuation marks used in most documents.

- a. Apostrophe – Use apostrophes to show possession and create contractions.
 - (1) To show possession of an object, use an apostrophe with an s. For example - The Soldier’s weapon or The SGM’s banquet
 - (2) To Create Contractions - Avoid contractions in formal writing.
- b. Colon

Use the colon to call attention to the words that follow it and for several other situations:

(3) A List

➤ Example: To train for the APFT you conduct the following exercises regularly: one hundred sit-ups, fifty push-ups, and a three-mile run.

(4) A Quotation

➤ Example: As you face this challenge, consider the words of General Eisenhower: "What counts is not necessarily the size of the dog in the fight – it's the size of the fight in the dog."

(5) Colon – colons are also appropriate to use to show time in hours and minutes, proportions, and between a title and subtitle.

➤ Example: 3:30 p.m. Unfortunately, the ratio of officers to enlisted was 2:1.

c. Quotation Marks

Do not use quotation marks for emphasis or for unfamiliar foreign names or words. Instead, italicize these words. If you are using two foreign words, one familiar and one unfamiliar, italicize both for clarity. However, there is no need to italicize foreign words which are in common use or which are proper nouns.

Use quotations around direct quotes, for example when quoting a source. If the quote is an exact quote it needs to have quotations. If it is paraphrased or summarized it does not need direct quotes.

d. Punctuation at the End of Quotations

When using a period or a comma in a quotation, place them inside the quotation marks as shown below:

➤ Example: "This is unacceptable," said the BDE S3. "I expect you to always brief the bottom line up front."

However, place colons, semicolons, and other punctuation not originally part of the quote, outside the quotation marks.

➤ Example: MG Jones wrote, "I regret that I am unable to be physically present to recognize this veteran"; however, his letter came with a unit coin.

***NOTE Use semi-colons, colons, and dashes infrequently. Rarely use parenthesis.**

Section IV – Mechanics – The Little Things

Mechanics regards numbers, abbreviations, specialized or emphatic words, and jargon.

3-19. Numbers

If the sentence starts with a number, spell it out or re-write the sentence so that the number does not start the sentence. If a number is less than ten, spell it out. Units of measurement, time and money, appear as numerals, unless the time is nonliteral or indefinite – ex – in a day or two, finish by the eleventh hour, lasted more than four decades.

- a. Use an en dash when using a continuous period of time – ex – 2006-09.
- b. For decades or centuries use wording, not numerals – ex – in the last three decades.
- c. If a number is part of a name spell it out – ex – Air Force One, Three Rivers, PA.
- d. Generally numerals are fine for dates, addresses, percentages, fractions, decimals, scores, statistics, and exact amounts of money.

There are exceptions to this rule, and they will depend upon your course. If the course prefers you use figures over spelling out numbers, or vice versa, always do what is asked.

3-20. Italics

Italics (Underlining): Italics is a slanting font style used in printed material. Some courses prefer underlining; either is fine for the following situations.

- a. For titles of works according to Chicago Manual of Style (CMS).
- b. Names of spacecraft, aircraft, and ships.
- c. When writing foreign words in an English sentence.

3-21. Slang, Jargon, Cliché, Colloquialism

Avoid slang (tea), jargon (lifer), clichés (it's raining cats and dogs), and colloquialism's (informal regional phrases – bless your heart), when writing professional and academic essays.

Chapter 4 – Standard 3: Concision – Keeping things short and simple

What is concision?

Being concise means using only the words necessary to transmit an idea. It requires balancing the amount of information you provide against the number of words you write, while maintaining the idea of the assignment.

4-1. Now for some explaining about “keeping things short and simple”

AR 25-50, page 6, provides the following guidance on being concise.

a. How to write in short, concise sentences:

- (1) All paragraphs should be no more than 10 lines or 1” deep.
- (2) All sentences should be short, approximately 12-15 words.
- (3) Using the simplest form of verb, no redundant ideas, and minimal abbreviations.

b. And why do you want to write short, concise sentences?

- (1) It decreases length and reduces confusion and errors in your writing.
- (2) It helps the reader understand without confusing the point.
- (3) It keeps the assignment accurate, without unnecessary filler.

4-2. Redundancies, Inflated Phrases, and Emphatic Language

a. Redundancies occur when sentences include information that duplicates ideas.

Example of a redundant sentence:

➤ SFC McCool was trained at West Point learning as a cadet.*

***This is not only redundant as “trained” and “learning” state the same idea, it is also passive voice.**

➤ SFC McCool trained as a cadet at West Point.*

***This is shorter, concise, and in active voice**

b. Inflated phrases happen when you use more words than necessary to make a point.

Examples of inflated phrases and their counterparts:

In accordance with	Use – Per
Due to the fact that	Use – Because
At the present time	Use – Currently, Now
In order to	Use – To
In spite of the fact that	Use – Although
By means of	Use - By

Figure 4-1. Inflated Phrases

- c. Emphatic language is when you include extra words for emphasis to make a point.

Examples of emphatic language:

- Example - It is critical that all Soldiers examine their bedding for gross doughnut crumbs.
- Explanation - The phrase “it is critical that” and the word “gross” provides emphasis that is not necessary.

Better sentence: All Soldiers must examine bedding for doughnut crumbs.

4-3. And I’m still confused. So can I have some tips?

Of course, you might still have questions about concision, and the writing of simple, easily read sentences. So, here are some quick and easy tips for you to follow:

- a. Limit long words (three or more syllables)
- b. Avoid jargon, clichés, legalese, colloquialisms, and try to write in a conversational tone
- c. Use precise concrete words rather than abstract or overly descriptive ones
- d. Keep sentences to 15-20 words. Try not to go over 25 words per sentence
- e. Do not put more than one idea in a sentence
- f. Cut out wordy phrases and repetition
- g. Eliminate unnecessary modifiers (really, basically, actually...)
- h. Eliminate redundancy (terrible tragedy, unexpected surprise, spooky spy)
- i. The best tip – GET TO THE POINT

Chapter 5 – Standard 4: Putting a “Bottom Line Up Front” and Purpose

Good intelligence writing provides decision-making information to readers. To help readers, you must place the most important information first. AR 25-50, page 6, calls this putting your “bottom line up front” (BLUF).

For any document the front refers to its beginning. The front of a sentence is the first few words. The front of a paragraph contains the first few sentences. The front of a document includes the title or subject line and introduction.

Knowing what your BLUF is will require organization of your paper

Instructors watch for two items in your writing: the clarity of the bottom line (analysis) and its physical location in the document.

5-1. And how does a BLUF work?

The writer’s top priority is to state the bottom line as soon as possible as required by your course. In Army writing, the reader (your instructor) wants the writer to start with the conclusions then defend them.

For Army Intelligence the paper is usually organized in the following way:

- a. Bottom Line Up Front (BLUF) – state the purpose of the paper, or what it is that you want your reader to walk away with. An example for this could be – The Army should make tastier MREs to boost morale, create better eating habits, and improve Soldier productivity.
- b. Defend the Analysis – argue/prove how tastier MREs will boost morale, create better eating habits, and improve Soldier productivity.
- c. Conclusion – MREs are not beneficial, but they could be if the Army takes these steps.

5-2. How do I know if my bottom line is up front?

Indicators that the bottom line is up front:

- a. The main point is in the introduction paragraph
- b. The document contains a clear, descriptive title.
- c. You can easily see what your main point is. Can you? If not then you may not have clearly written your BLUF written.

Although academic and other styles of writing may want you to use the body paragraphs to build up to your conclusion, this is not the Army writing style. The Army wants everything right in front.

5-3. Titles and the BLUF

Reports focus on delivering data, and you may need to provide the BLUF within the title.

For example, compare these two versions of report titles:

- “Risks and Consequences of Not Writing to Appease your Intelligence Instructor”
- “Writing for your Intelligence Instructor”

The first is clearer, and tells the reader what the point of the assignment will be. While the first line may not reveal a bottom line – which may not be appropriate for a report – it does provide information necessary for the reader to decide how to address the risks.

5-4. And Now for Your Purpose

Every assignment should have well-defined purpose. Your audience should recognize the primary purpose immediately and secondary purposes should not detract from the main one. Readers should care about the document and the arguments within it. Some examples:

- a. Arguing –changing the mind of your reader to adopt an idea or course of action
 - Examples: argumentative essay, debate
- b. Reporting – telling the audience what happened objectively
 - Examples: journalism, fact-finding, summary
- c. Informing – sharing important knowledge with your audience
 - Examples: diagnostics, status updates
- d. Explaining – telling the audience why something happened or how something works
 - Examples: teaching, instructions, reference work
- e. Presenting (an expert or professional opinion) – offering insight or wisdom from direct experience
 - Examples: court testimony, briefing

5-5. Tips for Revision

Establishing the overall main point in the document is the top priority, and some documents, such as reports, require more summary than others. Ask your instructor if your assignment requires a BLUF in an unusual location (not in the first paragraph).

Chapter 6 – Standard 5: Analysis – How to Analyze and Argue

As an intelligence professional, you will analyze a problem, process information from various sources, and report your findings. You may also argue and defend your analysis.

All analysis asks you to do is analyze, evaluate, interpret, and integrate outside sources to offer a complete idea with resources to back it up.

Analysis requires you to closely look at and examine an idea, object, belief, or situation. It then breaks down each piece of information to study and describe relationships. Once you work through this you will show the relationship between the pieces and how they all relate to each other. This is a necessary skill for any Intelligence writer as it helps with argument.

Instructors will watch for the building of facts and the connections that show how the facts relate to the argument.

6-1. Where do you start with Analysis, because I am confused

First you need to know what you are going to analyze. Your instructor will give you the task and topic. It is up to you to figure out what interests you the most, and how to find the research you need. The library is your greatest asset, so it is highly suggested you start there.

Analysis focuses on the how and why of a situation, idea, object, belief, or relationship. These are the questions you need to focus on. The difficulty most have is the fact that it is up to you to find and interpret the data. You need to look at the facts and research you have gathered, then figure out your viewpoint and what claim or statement you want to make about it.

An example of an analytical statement:

- PVT Ryan wakes up at 0500 to shoot every day because he wants to become an expert.
- Why – He wants to become an expert
- How – He wakes up at 0500 to shoot

We know both the why and how, now we need to break it down to what goal he is aiming for as that will bring both the how and why together. We know it is because he wants to become an expert.

As you write, think about two things: the reader and the product. Your reader is the one who will be making a decision based on the information you provide. You have to think about what they already know, and what they might want to know. Do they

understand the final analysis already, or are you introducing something new? What will they do with the information you are giving them? Make sure you are in-depth with your analysis, if you don't give enough information, or give too much information, the point will not be developed enough, or will become lost.

6-2. I am still confused!

Understandably, you might still have questions, or be confused. Hopefully the sample paragraph below will help:

Insurgents (INS) within 10km of base STAR have only used pressure plate improvised explosive devices (PPIEDs). One can assess that they will use PPIEDs to attack coalition forces (CF) for the remainder of the year. Also known is that PPIEDs are the cheapest form of targeting CFs, and require the least amount of training. PPIEDs often detonate away from base operations to distract from the real operational necessity of the area. INS often place PPIEDS in random areas to analyze CF responses. From this the assessment can be made that the INS network surrounding base STAR is unsophisticated and is designed to assist in the overall operational plan of the region. It is plausible they are informing other networks of CF responses to their attacks.

This paragraph states the How and Why – PPIEDs and to see CF response times. This paragraph then goes to offer information based on this analysis – the INS are using this information to build estimates of response times and are likely passing the information to other networks.

6-3. I think I understand, but I'm being asked to argue too!

Yes, in an Intelligence analysis you may be asked to include both analysis and argument, but this only means you will be providing the analysis then arguing the reason the data you are using proves or supports the claim you are making.

Arguments introduce the data and claims, while analysis shows the link between the two.

One thing you have to be careful of is making sure that the argument is solid, and is not opinion or speculation. For example:

- The M1A1 Abrams tank in the best tank in the world.

***The statement is opinion because the word “best” is not quantifiable. While the Abrams is a very capable tank, not everyone will agree it is the best.**

A better example:

- The M1A1 Abrams tank is effective because it has a powerful main gun, a high rate of speed, and has multi-layer crew protection.

***This is a better statement because the claim (The M1A1 Abrams tank is effective. . .) can be supported by the evidence (it has a powerful main gun, a high rate of speed, and has multi-layer crew protection.)**

A good method for argument is the Toulmin Method. This method suggests that to support a good argument you need five parts: the claim (main argument), data (evidence), warrants (explanation of data), backing (reinforce explanation), and rebuttal (strengths and weaknesses of the claim, and what might be the opposing side).

If asked to argue you always need to make sure you know the counter-arguments so you can refute these and build a stronger argument.

One important thing to remember is that an argument is not a persuasive essay. It all is in how you word your sentences when writing.

- a. Argument: Should, Must, Will.
- b. Persuasive: Could, Might, Maybe.

***NOTE Stay away from phrases that focus on the writing process such as, "This paper will..." or "This paper is about." Also, never conclude with "In conclusion."**

Appendix A – Rubric

US Army Intelligence Center of Excellence Writing Standards – Analytic Rubric

USAICoE Criteria	4	3	2	1
Voice: Active or passive voice	Paper is in active voice with no instances of passive voice, writer recognizes what active voice is.	Paper uses active voice, will switch to passive voice where active is correct.	Paper fluctuates between passive and active voice, causes confusion for the reader.	Paper is in passive voice with no active voice present, may have clear thought but voice is incorrect.
Accuracy: Spelling, punctuation, grammar, wording, formatting, and citations	Paper will have minor errors. It will be clear what the writer's purpose is, and will be easy to read in one sitting.	Paper has multiple errors but will be easy to read, intent is understood.	Has multiple, repetitive errors, will be hard to read, but reader will understand intent of paper.	Has multiple, repetitive errors. This paper will be confusing and hard to read.
Concision: Keep everything as short as possible	This paper will have few sentences that go over length needed to be concise and lean, and will be clear in both transitions and ideas.	This paper will have sentences throughout that go over 25 words, but the ideas will transition and be clear.	This paper will have sentences on each page that are too long, the ideas may transition well, but will be hard to understand.	Most sentences in this paper will be over the length required (25 words or less), be rambling in its thoughts and ideas, intent is unclear.
Purpose: "Bottom Line Up Front"	Author places the main point within the first lines of the introduction paragraph.	Author's main point will be in the introduction and the idea is clear, but not to the point	Author's main point is too broad/ vague to recognize, and the main point is in the middle or end of the document.	Author does not indicate the main point, written units lack organization.
Analysis: Evidence and Arguments	Argument/Analysis is clear, paper uses sources to appropriately back up evidence, author may still use opinion and speculation, although sparingly.	Argument/Analysis is clear, but paper uses opinion or speculation to support evidence, sources will be relevant to argument but not used appropriately.	Paper attempts to argue opinion or speculation instead of analysis, but argument isn't clear and sources don't support evidence.	No argument/ analysis. The paper is entirely opinion/ speculation or a summary/ paraphrase of secondary sources.

Figure A-1. Analytic Rubric

Rubric Overview: Above is the USAICoE Writing Standard Analytic Rubric. Some courses may need to calibrate this to fit specific assignments using the Modification Sheet.

Appendix B – Feedback for Essays

PV	Passive Voice
CAP	Capitalize
SO	Spell out (Contractions, Numbers, etc.)
SV	Subject/Verb Agreement
DM	Dangling Modifier
MM	Misplaced Modifier
VT	Shift in Verb Tense
MW	Missing Word
WW	Wrong Word
Frag	Sentence fragment
RO	Run-on sentence
SP	Spelling
TW	Too Wordy
Rep	Repetitive word
Awk	Awkward wording/phrasing/sentence structure, reword
MB	Missing BLUF
SB	BLUF needs to be stronger
UB	Unclear BLUF
Analysis/Argument	Unclear transitions, organization, flow of sources – highlight but don't state analysis/argument – you can make notes in red in the text

A. Voice – Highlight - instances of Passive Voice instead of Active
B. Accuracy – Highlight - spelling, punctuation, grammar, wording, formatting, and citations
C. Concision – Highlight – short, concise sentences and paragraphs
D. Bottom Line up Front (BLUF) – Highlight – purpose
E. Analysis – Highlight – transitions, organization, is it analysis/argument

Glossary

Accuracy: Using correct grammar, wording, format. Having an essay free from errors.

Active Voice: A type of a clause or sentence in which a subject performs an action and expresses it through its representative verb

Adjective: A word or phrase added to a noun to modify or describe it.

Adjective pronoun: Any pronoun functioning as an adjective. For example, “This car looks like a Fiat.”

Adverb: a word or phrase used to modify an adjective, verb, or another adverb expressing a relation of place, time, circumstance, manner, cause, or degree.

Analysis: Breaking down a situation, concept, or argument into its constituent parts to examine the interrelated features. Analysis is an intellectual process frequently connected to formal logic and debate, though is not limited to it.

Antecedent: Previously identified noun that a pronoun identifies later. For example, “Jack left town, but I don’t know where he went.” “Jack” is the antecedent.

AR 25-50: Army Regulation 25-50 governs preparing correspondence documents. The USAICoE Writing Handbook explains how to apply these principles to other kinds of documents.

Argument: A series of connected claims intended to form a proposition; in formal logic, an argument is a debatable thesis intended to establish an author’s major frame of reference for persuasion.

Awkward shift: A change in sentence structure, usually from mismatched pronoun use, shift in verb tense, or change in number of the subject from singular to plural or vice versa.

Bottom Line Up Front: The “bottom line up front” or “BLUF” states the main point of the document at the beginning. Originally defined in AR 25-50 for correspondence, USAICoE recommends using the term as a principle for all Army writing. Regardless of writing situation, Army style encourages writers to prioritize their conclusions to create reader-friendly documents.

Chronology: General term for matters pertaining to time. May involve the study of time itself or events taking place in a linear sequence. For example, asking, “What is our timeline of events?” is taking a chronology.

Chronological organization: A method of organizing information based on order of discovery, relaying the actions taking place in a linear sequence. For example,

organizing by “start to finish” rather than “most to least important.” See also procedural organization.

Citation: A formal reference to another author’s work embedded in the text of an original document with limited publication information (an in-text citation) or found in a separate list with full publication information, such as a Works Cited, Bibliography, or References page (a full citation).

Coherence: The use of language to establish understanding and organization within a document.

Competent: Describes borderline--but passable--student work product. Indicates maturing ability to create content with clarity, directness, and brevity; functionally meets the assignment criteria.

Complete subject: This forms the entire subject of the sentence, including any modifiers. For example, “CPT Rothgar went to the PX for supplies.”

Completion: The quality of being finished; containing all necessary requirements. For written texts, this means including all required sections of the format, as well as meeting any publication demands for the audience. A document is incomplete, for example, when authors do not include appropriate citations for their sources. The audience must guess about how much of the writing is original and the author’s argument is incomplete.

Concision: Similar to brevity, concision is the ability to infuse the greatest amount of information into the fewest words. For USAICoE, this is a core criterion of all writing.

Conclusions: In logic, the conclusion is the result of a chain of reasoning. Conclusions are valid or invalid based on the truth of premise and the strength of the reasoning.

Conjunction: This part of speech joins phrases and clauses to form extended ideas.

Convention: A series of rules that define a reader’s expectations. For example, a résumé is usually one page, containing work history and education, whereas a letter will include a salutation and addresses for the author and recipient. For each kind of document (for example, memo, email, essay, news article, etc.) it is critical that the author know and understand the conventions that are appropriate for the readers.

Coordinating conjunction: A conjunction placed between words, phrases, clauses, or sentences of equal rank, e.g., and, but, or.

Credibility: The status and reputation of an author while presenting evidence; sometimes refers to authors’ experiences, backgrounds, or characteristics as they relate to being a trustworthy source of information for the purpose of an argument.

Critical Tasks: The set of skills required for effective operation within an MOS. Instruction and assignments use lists of critical tasks to set priorities for course assignments and assessment value.

Dangling Modifier: This is a confusing modifier (descriptor). The reader is unclear what the writer is describing. Example: “I noticed Bambi was walking her dog in pajamas.” Was Bambi in pajamas or her dog?

Deductive Reasoning: The method of reasoning that begins with large instances or examples to narrow down to specific or individual applications. This type draws conclusions based on breaking down a body of evidence into smaller parts to draw conclusions about the whole.

Demonstrative pronouns: These pronouns “demonstrate” by indicating specific instances or nouns. For example, “That zombie isn’t dead.”

Dependent Clause: A group of words with a subject and a verb. It does not express a complete thought so it is not a sentence and can't stand alone.

Description: The use of language (sensory, perceptive, process, or jargon) to illustrate a concept, idea, or situation.

Developing: Describes student work product struggling to meet minimum passing criteria; in need of additional work in one or more areas of the assignment or shows serious problems in clarity, directness, and brevity.

Direct object: The direct object of a sentence receives the action performed by the subject and verb. For example, “Critics often dismiss heroism.”

Dropped Quotes: A quote without context; typically found in documents where authors have not introduced the quote with a signal phrase or followed it with an explanation. Recognized easily by looking for quotes standing alone as “islands” within a paragraph.

Evaluation (of sources): A process of determining the relative strength of a research source towards contributing in an argument. Evaluation requires the author’s discretion and judgment to determine the value of the source.

Federal Plain Language Guidelines: The Federal Plain Language Guidelines emerged as a government effort to simplify complicated laws, regulation, and records.

Focus: Maintaining a consistent argument throughout the paper following a well-defined scope and main point. Focus relies heavily on analysis, the explanation of evidence, as well as organization, the placement of points throughout the paper in a logical structure.

Forecasting: A technique of Coherence where the author issues a statement predicting information to follow, complete with the application of said structure later in the paper. For example, when the author states that there are “three good reasons” to trust the argument and follows by issuing the three reasons in the same order.

Front: This describes the location in close proximity to the top of the page or writing unit. The closer to the front of the document, the less time it takes the reader to get there.

Frontloading: A writing technique that places the most important information at the front of the document, section, paragraph, or sentence. During the drafting process, some writers may find that their insights occur near the end of paragraphs or within the conclusion section as they develop ideas by writing them out. It is critical that they revise their papers later by reorganizing these conclusions as priorities in the text.

Indefinite pronoun: These pronouns indicate generalities rather than specifics. For example, “All Soldiers must attend spaceship training, without exception.”

Independent Clause: A clause that can stand by itself as a simple sentence.

Indirect object: The indirect object comes between the verb and direct object and provides additional information about the direct object, for example to whom or for whom something is done. “He threw her an MRE.”

Inductive Reasoning: Reasoning resulting from starting with specific instances and creating generalizations from them. The validity of inductive conclusions stems from the degree to which the individual examples represent the whole.

Informed Opinion: An informed opinion differs from opinion because it relies on qualified interpretation of facts from an experienced, knowledgeable source. The source of the opinion determines the quality. In a court case, for example, many witnesses may have opinions about the case.

Inquiry: A process of investigation where an author seeks answers to fundamental questions.

Intellectual Property: The original ideas of another individual or organization for which they may receive symbolic or material credit, such as praise or compensation.

Intensive Pronoun: Intensive pronouns emphasize the actor or another pronoun. For example, “The keynote speaker was the General himself.” See also reflexive pronoun.

Interjection: An exclamation, often used with an exclamation mark.

Interrogative pronouns: These pronouns begin questions and substitute for an unknown noun. For example, “Who will lead PT this morning?”

Intransitive verb: These verbs describe a state of being or function without a recipient to the action. For example, “The platoon stood at attention,” has no recipient to the action.

Investigation: The formal method of pursuing inquiry, involving research into various sources to establish the basis for propositions and arguments.

Issue: For arguments, the issue is the central conflict expressed in the main point and the topic of the text as a whole. While there may be many issues attached to a conflict, the author must define the specific scope of the issue as it applies to the argument.

Issue-Focused: Writing is “issue-focused” when it defines the root cause of the problem or conflict identified in the main point/thesis and structures a consistent argument which interprets all available and relevant evidence.

Jargon: Formal and commonly used terminology among cultural and professional groups. For example, the use of “nuts to butts” among soldiers would require no explanation, however, repeating the term around a civilian would require explanation.

Key Words: Specific language critical to understanding concepts within an argument or the description of the concepts themselves.

Main Point: The main point (sometimes referred to as the main idea, thesis, argument, central topic, BLUF, or claim) for a document is an explicit or implied statement indicating the author’s purpose in creating the document. In Army writing, state the main point as quickly, clearly, and succinctly as possible without losing the overall meaning of the point.

Meaning: 1) The clear, unambiguous conclusions of an author as conveyed within an Army document; 2) in a general sense, the importance generated by a document as it addresses real-world issues with relevant conclusions; 3) for authors, it is the attempt to address the document’s purpose by providing information to answer questions like, “So what?” or “Why should I care?”

Misplaced Modifier: Modifiers (descriptors) that are confusing, usually because they are too far away from the word(s) they are describing.

Modifier: Describes another word in a sentence.

Multiple subjects: Describes any sentence with more than one subject. For example, “CPT Arya and CPT Stark bought jerky at the PX” includes two subjects.

Noun: A person, place, animal, thing, or idea

Opinion: A personal conviction or belief relating to an issue of any kind. Opinion differs from fact in that it draws conclusions that may not be factually certain.

Paraphrase: The restating of another's idea in your own words.

Passive Voice: A clause or sentence in which an action (through verb), or an object of a sentence, is emphasized rather than its subject.

Perceptions: Impressions or feelings derived from direct contact with a person, place, thing, or idea.

Perfection: No author can achieve literal "perfection," that is, a 100% agreement with all audiences at all times about the meaning of communication.

Personal pronoun: A word that refers to a stated noun (a specific person, place, or thing). For example, "The Soldiers stood out on the parade ground. They looked pretty serious."

Plagiarism: The accidental or purposeful misrepresentation of original work as someone else's. Typically occurs in documents requiring original insight where the author either does not cite another source properly or purposefully injects a source without recognizing the original.

Possessive pronouns: A word that refers to a stated noun clarifying possession. For example, "The Soldiers stood out on the parade ground, holding their rifles."

Premises: Foundational claims within a chain reasoning and the basis of the propositions intended to draw conclusions.

Preposition: This part of speech links strings of nouns and pronouns into phrases to modify other parts of the sentence.

Procedural organization: A method of organizing information based on order of operations, relaying the exact steps or method toward completion of a process, for example, organizing by "first to last step" rather than "most to least important." See also chronological organization.

Procedural (description): A method of description that relays the exact steps or method toward completion of a process.

Pronoun: A word that refers to a stated noun. See also antecedent.

Pronoun-antecedent agreement: Pronouns must agree in number and person to the noun they replace. A correct example is, "A Soldier must see his or her platoon Sergeant before leaving the post." It would be incorrect to say, "A Soldier must see their platoon Sergeant before leaving post." If the antecedent is singular, the pronoun must be as well. The most frequent problem is the use of the plural 'they' or 'theirs' instead of the singular.

Proper Noun: Identifies a single entity and is used to refer to that entity, such as London, Jupiter, Sarah, or Microsoft, as distinguished from a common noun, which is a noun that refers to a class of entities and may be used when referring to instances of a specific class.

Proposition: Statement of a claim based on a conclusion or the result of a chain of reasoning. Propositions typically define the conclusion of an argument or suggest a course of action intended to persuade a specific audience.

Purpose: The specific reason explaining why the document, correspondence, or report is necessary. For most writing, the purpose is contingent on the argument.

Reciprocal pronoun: Use reciprocal pronouns to refer back to plural nouns (antecedents). For example, “You guys need to take care of each other out there” (reciprocal pronoun in italics).

Reflexive Pronoun: Intensive pronouns indicate that the actor is also the recipient. For example, “Han Solo used to be in great shape, but he really let himself go.”

Relevance: The degree to which a source’s material applies to an author’s argument, reasoning, conclusions, or data.

Repetition (in research): The discipline of reviewing a body of research and investigating or searching again as necessary. As a recursive process, investigation is an on-going, not singular event.

Research Question: A specific inquiry intended to form the basis of a thesis. For example, “To what degree will a new Space Force be useful?”

Sensory Details: Sensory details describe sight, sound, taste, touch, space, and motion to an audience.

Sentences: The primary unit of language construction in the English language, typically organized starting with a subject, followed by a verb and an object. For Army writing, authors are encouraged to maintain this organization and emphasis on the actor rather than the recipient.

Signal Phrases: Short clauses intended to indicate the introduction of a non-original source or transition to a new idea.

Simple Subject: The irreducible, unmodified subject of the sentence. For example, “CPT Reynolds went to the PX to get supplies.”

Subject (of a sentence): The subject of a sentence usually precedes the verb and signifies the main idea.

Summary: An author’s condensed version of a topic, usually in reference to another author’s work.

Tangents: Deviations from a main point with decreased relevance to the reader which demonstrates a lack of coherence and purpose in writing.

Transition Statements: A short clause intended to shift topics within an argument. Unlike a tangent, a transition statement directs readers toward a purpose, such as elaboration, example, explanation, or reasoning.

Transitive verb: A transitive verb provides an action to the sentence that requires a recipient.

Understood subject: Some sentences, commands, for example, do not directly state a subject. The reader understands that “you” forms the subject. For example, “[You] Grab that mop and clean up this hall.”

USAICoE Criteria: Writing standards derived from AR 25-50 as they apply to general writing assignments in USAICoE coursework.

Verb: Verbs convey the action of a sentence between the subject and the predicate. Usually, the action is dynamic but it can also express a state of being by using the verb “to be.”

Voice: Specifically, active or passive voice. For military writing, the primary concern is in creating or recognizing active and passive voice.