



# Verbal Equinox

## A Comment from the Boss

**Sylvia Newman**  
**Writing Center Director**

Welcome to this issue of the *Verbal Equinox*! Last spring, we tried something new with the *VE*; we geared it toward writers and teachers of writing rather than just Writing Center devotees. Several professors used it in their writing classes, and we had such an enthusiastic response that we decided to try it again. This issue features specific instructions for writing essays, resumes and poems, and for using MLA and APA citation styles. We hope it will be useful for beginning and experienced writers as well as those who teach writing.

This column focuses on the happenings of the Writing Center-what's new, what's hot, well, OK, what's new and perhaps interesting. One of our goals for this year is to certify our tutor training program with the College Reading and Language Association (CRLA). Tutors will be able to earn tutoring certification that is transferable to most universities across the country. We are also making more connections with other tutoring services under the auspices of Academic Services and Programs (ASSP). To this end, we met with all the tutors from all the different areas for our annual orientation. It was exciting to be with over 100 student tutors with the same dedication to helping others as we have in the Writing Center.

Also, the Skills Enhancement Center (Annex 12) has become a part of ASSP. We look forward to the increased versatility and accessibility to students the Skills Enhancements Center will bring to our tutoring programs. On a personal note, I have completed my master's degree in the Theory and Practice of Writing program at Utah State University. This blessed event has enabled me to increase my responsibilities and hours in coordinating the Writing Center-and regain some semblance of sanity.

Finally, we must announce the departure of Dr. David Sumner, the writing program director of the English department, who has served the last three years as our advisor and the instructor for the tutor training class. He will head for Linfield College in McMinnville, Oregon, in January. The search for the answers to life's persistent questions will be markedly less interesting without Dave.

*We hope you enjoy this issue and find application for it in your classes and/or in your own writing!*



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**The Formula****Andrea Carter**

Have you ever been presented with a paper to write and had no idea how to organize it? I think almost every college student has at one time or another. In my view, the first thing to do is to decide how to organize your paper. This can be done in a handwritten outline or just mentally. However, if you do not organize your paper in the beginning, it will likely take longer and be ten times harder to write. In the end, the final organization of the paper will likely be questionable.

When I was in junior high, my mother presented me with a formula a teacher taught her to use when she was in junior high. She used the formula from junior high through college, as I have done myself. While the formula is similar to the traditionally taught five-paragraph essay, I think it is much easier to remember, more logical in its construction, and offers more possibilities for expansion than the traditional form. It is definitely more creative in its construction than the traditional form. I hope this formula is helpful to you in your future writing assignments.

**1. HO HUM** (The Introduction): A sentence or a short introductory paragraph(s) to get the reader's attention.

Example:

*Many college freshmen panic at the thought of writing an essay.*

**2. BULL'S EYE** (The Thesis): Write a statement of what your paper is going to be about. (Tell them what your going to tell them.)

Example:

*Using a simple formula can help alleviate the stress of writing an essay.*

**3. FOR EXAMPLE OR BECAUSE** (The Body of the Paper): Write three, four, or more points that support the Bull's Eye (thesis). In college, generally the points are separate paragraphs, or each point can be several paragraphs.

Example:

*1-The formula is simple to remember.*

*2-It enables the writer to clearly organize the paper.*

*3-The system allows for shortening or lengthening the paper as needed.*

**4. SO WHAT?** (The Conclusion): Restate your hull's eye and summarize the paper. What did you tell them?

Example:

*In order to alleviate the panic many college students have writing a paper, follow these steps. They will enable you to write a better organized and more clearly readable essay.*

**Sources:**

Carter, Gaye. Personal Interview September 14, 2001.

Ledjingham, Mercy L. et al. *A Team Taught Communicative Skill: Wahlquist Jr. High School, Composition and Speech*. Ogden, Utah: 1966.



## Get Recognized.

The Writing Center is sponsoring a contest.

All WSU students are eligible to submit selections in the areas of **fiction, non-fiction, and poetry**.

Prizes will be awarded and winners will be published in the next edition of *Verbal Equinox*.

Go to [http://departments.weber.edu/writingcenter/Contests\\_Publish.htm](http://departments.weber.edu/writingcenter/Contests_Publish.htm) for more information.

You can also call (801) 626-6263 or just stop into room #261.

## Getting A's Through Explanation

Dan Sayers

Writing doesn't come easy to me. I doubt it comes easy to anyone, really. This little article is for all those people like me who have gotten an essay back saying, "Needs more explanation." Explaining ideas to the fullest extent is the best way to get an A on a paper. A paper without explanation is like a birthday without cake: where's the good stuff? To a teacher, the explanation shows that you've really analyzed a topic and have something important to say about it.

The way I see it, paragraphs within the body of a paper basically have three components:

- A strong statement that backs up the thesis of the paper.  
Evidence to support the statement.
- An explanation of how everything in the paragraph relates to the thesis.

Although this article focuses on the third component, the other two are equally as important and shouldn't be ignored in a paper. Basically, explanation is a broad term that is hard to pigeonhole into one statement. The ways in which I use explanation in my papers is to show how evidence relates to the main idea of the paragraph (explaining quotes and how evidence supports the main idea) and to show how the main idea of the paragraph relates to the thesis of the paper.

A lot of writers think that they don't need to include explanation because it's implied within the paper. I try to never leave anything to

the readers' imaginations because they may not understand everything I

Explanation clarifies my points and allows the

what I'm thinking.

There are two different ways to include explanation in a paper.

An author can either include it while writing the paper, taking the time to write their explanation down while writing the piece, or an author can include it while revising the paper, looking for places to add more (or any) explanation.

**A paper without explanation is like a birthday without cake: where's the good stuff?**

I wrote a paper for the National Undergraduate Literature Conference last year which I'm going to use as an example of how I used explanation to add depth to writing. I wrote about the Byronic Hero (a literary character who basically is haunted by his or her past and who also renounces societal standards in favor of a personal moral code) and traced it into modern times. My paragraph was on Batman, and my first draft clearly didn't have enough explanation in it to sound convincing:

The anti-hero sentiment of the Byronic Hero still survives. In fact, the Byronic Hero has been a staple of literature, movies, and television since the 1950s. Batman is probably the most recognizable literary Byronic Hero of modern times.

So what's wrong with that paragraph? I didn't explain how Batman was a Byronic Hero. Here's how the paragraph turned out after I explained how Batman was a Byronic Hero:

The comic-book character Batman is a clear example of how the anti-hero sentiment of the Byronic hero survives today. He has been a staple of literature, movies, and television since his origin in the late 1940s. He, like the Byronic Hero, is haunted by his past and rejects societal standards in favor of his own moral code. As a young boy, Batman watched as *his* parents were murdered and became a dark, brooding vigilante as a result,.

How much better is the second paragraph? I provided a strong statement that coincided with my thesis (the Byronic Hero still has a strong presence today), provided an example (Batman), and then explained how Batman is a Byronic Hero. Not to toot my own horn or anything, but I think I did a pretty good job.

In conclusion, it's always good to go back and double check one's writing to see if explanation has been included, asking the following important questions:

- From the words on the page, will my audience be able to understand how this paragraph relates to my thesis?
- Will my audience be able to see how the evidence I've presented in the paragraph reinforces the main idea of my paragraph?

If you answer no to either of these questions, start explaining!

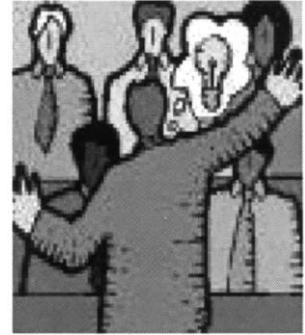
## Why Write a Resume?

Melissa Paul

A resume is a one-page summary of your education, qualifications, skills, accomplishments, and job history that is directed toward a specific career or job goal. In a competitive job market, employers don't have the time or desire to interview the multitudes of applicants they may have for a single position. A well-written resume is your key to the door of an interview.

### Tips for writing a resume:

1. **Focus on a particular career or job goal.** List only the skills and qualifications that are relevant to that career focus. Mounds of irrelevant information will distract, not impress.
2. **Sell yourself.** A resume is an advertisement. You are selling yourself to an employer. Identify your skills and show why you will be an asset to the company.
3. **Write with impact.** Begin sentences with action verbs that emphasize your skills and abilities (i.e. created, designed, sold, managed, supervised). Quantify actual numbers when possible (supervised crew of 15). Omit the words "I, they, my" whenever possible.
4. **Be consistent.** List all chronological events with the most recent first. Keep bulleted items grammatically parallel (beginning each with an action verb is a safe bet).
5. **Be conservative.** Do not use fancy fonts. Print on white or off-white paper.
6. **Format for clarity.** Use white space, bullets, bold fonts, and indents to make your resume clear and visually appealing.
7. **Consider a cover letter.** A cover letter is the frosting on the resume cake. It's your chance to expand on skills and experiences specific to the job, and it's your chance to tell the employer what you can contribute to the company.
8. **Proofread.** When you think you're done, stop and read every word you have written. Check for errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, dates, and addresses. Ask someone else to read it; ask them for comments and suggestions. Revise as needed and proofread again. Remember, a good resume could open the door to a promising career.



### Tips for filling out a job application

1. **Write neatly and accurately.** A neat, accurate, and well-written job application could give you the edge and the job in a competitive market.
2. **Read the application.** There may specific instructions you'll need to know. Don't miss them.
3. **Be prepared.** You may be required to fill out the application on the spot. Know the correct names, dates, places, and anything else you might need. Make yourself a "cheat sheet." It's not a memory test; it's an opportunity to show your preparation.
4. **Ask to take the application home.** At home you'll be more relaxed and have more time. You could even use a typewriter. Pen or typewriter, write on scratch paper first. Know what you're writing before the ink touches the application.
5. **List what you have done, not what you haven't done.** If you've been unemployed, don't write "unemployed." Focus on the activities you were doing during that time--school, volunteer work, managing a household, or carpentry work on your home. Use anything that may show skill, ability, and a willingness to work.
6. **Know what you're applying for.** Do a little research. Know a little about the job and the pay.
7. **Pick your reference contacts beforehand.** Be sure you've talked to your references. Get their approval and their assurance that they'll give you that good reference that you need.
8. **Proofread.** When you think you're done, stop and read every word you have written. Check for errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, dates, and addresses. If possible, ask others to read it; ask them for comments and suggestions. Remember, with a poorly written job application, you could lose your edge and possibly the job.

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## JAN E SMITH

### OBJECTIVE

Position on editorial staff of publishing firm.

### EDUCATION

1999-2003 Weber State University  
Ogden, UT

*BA in English*

- Senior thesis: "Ethics in journalism"
- Honor roll 8 semesters

### AWARDS RECEIVED

Foster Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Essay, 2002

Recipient of Limeracci Scholarship

### WORK EXPERIENCE

1999-2003 WSU Writing Center  
Ogden, UT

*English tutor*

- Recipient of tuition waiver

2002 – 2003 The Signpost Ogden, UT

*Editor-in-chief*

- Number one student produced newspaper intermountain West
- Best on-the-spot news coverage intermountain West

### REFERENCES

Available upon request

*This example should give you some ideas on how to organize your own resume, but you don't need to copy this format exactly.*

*Play with the fonts and sizes; try holding or underlining a few things. Decide what part of your experience you want to emphasize and show that in your resume.*

*Remember, employers respect creativity. An original (but professional) resume could help you land a job.*



Sample Resume by  
Kendra Allred



## APA FAQs

Melissa Paul

### *What does APA stand for?*

APA stands for American Psychological Association. This format is most often used for papers written in the social and behavioral sciences as well as the medical field.

### *Why is citation so important?*

APA format allows readers to cross-reference your sources easily, provides consistent format within a discipline, gives you credibility as a writer, and protects you from plagiarism.

### *What is a reference page and how do I format one?*

A reference page comes at the end of your paper and contains a list of all the outside sources you used for research. Essentially, you should use as many sources as possible. The more research you do on a topic, the more credible you are as a writer.

Format your sources in the following order:

1. Author(s), last name, first initial, and the year the work was published in parentheses
2. Title of work (titles of books should be in italics while titles of articles or chapters should not be in ordinary type)
3. Publication information including the journal or magazine title, volume numbers, page numbers, etc.

For example, a citation for a book would look like this:

Adams, A., Davis, M., Ridge, S.. (2002). *The pet effect: animal companions and human health*. New York: Random House.

Note that all lines following the first should be indented. A citation for an article would look like this.

Canton, J. (2000, May). Pets and people: why we Love our animal companions. *The Eastern Vet*, 5, 12-18.

When you make your reference page, you should list your sources in alphabetical order according to the last name of the authors.



## Metaphor

WSU Literary Journal

We are looking for our 2003-2004 staff!

### Individuals needed in areas of:

Poetry  
Creative Fiction and Non-Fiction  
Academic Literature  
Art  
Music  
Layout and Web Design

This is a great way to boost your resume or just to associate with people who have the same interests as you do!

Visit [organizations.weber.edu/metaphor](http://organizations.weber.edu/metaphor) or email [metaphor@weber.edu](mailto:metaphor@weber.edu) for more

### *What are parenthetical citations?*

Parenthetical citations are used in the text of a paper. Ideally, every paragraph of your paper should contain at least one parenthetical citation. Any time you use information from an outside source, whether it be in the form of a direct quote, a summary, or paraphrasing, you should include a parenthetical citation with the last name of the author(s), the year the work was published, and the page number where you can find a direct quote.

Here is an example of parenthetical citation:

Some studies show that "even people who don't like animals have lower blood pressure and resting heart rates when a cat or dog is present in a room with them" (Miller, 2001, p. 13).

You can also include the author's name in text of your paper. In this case, you don't need to include it in the parenthetical citation. Add the year of the publication immediately following the author's name.

Dr. George Miller (2001) conducted a study in which he tested the physical responses of people who don't like animals to their presence. Surprisingly, he found that even when a person doesn't like an animal, his or her heart rate and blood pressure are lower when a cat or dog is in the room.

***How do I use headings?***

Headings are used to divide an APA paper into smaller sections. Use headings in your paper the same way you would on an outline. The major headings would be things like introduction, literature review, problem analysis, possible solutions, conclusion, etc. These main headings should be centered on the page and typed out like a regular sentence.

You will probably *only* need two or three levels of headings. For two levels, the first heading is centered and the first letter of each word capitalized; the second-level heading is placed flush left and italicized. For three levels, the first-level heading is centered, the second-level heading is placed flush left, italicized, and all words capitalized, and the third-level heading is italicized, indented five spaces, and *only* the first word of the line or phrase is capitalized.

Here is an example of the headings when you have to use all three levels:

Possible Solutions

*Medical Treatments*

*Pharmaceutical treatment.*

***What is a running head?***

In APA format, a running head is a word or phrase next to the page number that identifies the paper. If your paper is called, "The Health Benefits of Owning Pets," a good running head would be "Pets" or "Health and Pets." Use the header tool in your word processor to insert a running head.

***Where can I learn more about APA?***

You can find resources online through the Writing Center's web page: <http://departments.weber.edu/writingcenter>. Also, you can always come into the Writing Center and ask for help with specific questions.

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Writing is no trouble: you just jot down ideas as they occur to you. The jotting is simplicity itself - it is the occurring which is difficult.

--Stephen  
Leacock



## MLA Tips

Clark Davis

What is MLA? MLA stands for Modern Language Association. It is a style of writing used in most college freshman English courses. If you've taken English 1010 or 2010, you're most likely familiar with this style. This is a brief overview of how citations work in MLA style.

### Citations

When writing a paper in MLA style, you will be using outside resources to illustrate or enhance your thesis (the point of your paper). If you do not cite correctly, or in other words, if you use someone else's words, phrases, or ideas without giving them credit for it, then you are guilty of plagiarism, which can get you expelled from school. Whenever you take anything from someone else, you must cite your source or give them credit. Here are three examples of how to cite a source in a paper using MLA style:

### Regular Quotation

"The mountain lion is the third most endangered animal in the western United States" (Pinchot 39).

*Notice that at the end of the quote, the period goes at the end of the citation. Inside the parentheses are the author and the page number where the quote came from.*

### Quotation with a Signal Phrase

As Miller states, "three things to remember when documenting bird species are gender, color, and warble type" (433).

*A signal phrase signals the author of the quote before the quote begins, and because you have signaled the author, you do not need to put the author at the end inside of the parentheses. All you need is the page number.*

### Indented Quote

In her book, *A Writer's Reference*, Diana Hacker explains global revisions this way:

Global revisions address the larger elements of writing. Usually they affect chunks of text longer than a sentence, and frequently they can be quite dramatic. Whole paragraphs might be dropped, others added. Material once stretched over two or three paragraphs might be condensed into one. Entire sections might be rearranged. Even the content may change dramatically, for the process of revising stimulates thought. (17)

Any quote that is five lines or longer must be indented as shown here—two tabs from the left. Usually an indented quote is set off by a signal phrase and a colon. Quotes are not necessary because the indentation signifies that it is a quote. The period actually goes at the end of the last sentence of the quote, which is different from the previous two examples. Again, because you have signaled the author, all that goes inside the parentheses is the page number.

## Feel Stuck?

Join a writing group!

*Metaphor*, WSU's student literary journal, is sponsoring a writing program on campus. Students just like you will meet to share their writing and get feedback from their peers.

This is NOT just for English majors and professional writers! Most of the people who have participated in our groups in the past have been regular amateur writers who wanted to share their work and bear what people thought of it.

There will be three separate writing groups:

Poetry—Just like it says, share your poetry.

Creative Writing—This can be fiction or non-fiction.

Academic Literature—This is for writing on an academic topic in a way that general audience would appreciate it. *This is for personal writing, so you won't have people bringing in their class assignments to be corrected.* It's strictly for your own enjoyment!

Email [writinggroups@hotmail.com](mailto:writinggroups@hotmail.com) for more information.



## Poetry Place...No, no- Poetry Palace

Elisalyn Gardner

I am not sure I consider myself a poet (arm thrown dramatically across the brow) anymore, but poetry has been the focus of my university studies so I thought I would share what I have learned in my study or what would have been useful to know starting out.

## Getting your groove on:

*Brainstorming ideas for writing poems*

**Freewrites:** I find writing all my thoughts out and then going back and taking the "good bits" is how I compose most of my poems.

**Cut ups:** Cut out random words from magazine and then try to organize them into poems.

**Haikus:** Writing Haikus is a good, low pressure exercise to get yourself into that creative, organizing place.

**Lists:** Make a list of adjectives and a list of nouns then mix and match. Sometimes one happy accident combination will get you going (idea stolen from Jane Hirshfield).

**Write a Bad Poem:** Sometimes writer's block is from wanting so badly to write a GREAT poem. Try writing the worst poem possible to thumb your nose at your inner critic (idea stolen from Dr. Sally Shigley).

**Put Down the Pen and Read:** Reading other people's poetry can be discouraging (if it is phenomenal poetry), but also I find reading poetry gets me in a poetry frame of mind.

**Turn the Radio Up:** Sometimes it is good to know what inspires you. Besides other people's poetry, I am inspired by visual art, music of all sorts, and nature. If writing poetry is difficult for you right now, try going on a nature walk, looking at great art, listening to great music or doing whatever will invoke the poetic in yourself.

### *After-the-Ecstasy Editing Checklist*

*Most poems have to sit for a few days before I realize they are not the "masterpiece" I was sure I had written, but all of the "greats" in poetry did several drafts of poems. Here is my editing checklist:*

1. Is every word important to the poem as a whole?
2. Are there any clichés?
3. Does my poem include or exclude the reader?
4. Are there parts that I would have to explain for them to be meaningful?
5. If it is a rhyming poem, are my rhymes forced and cliché?
6. If the poem is in a form, does that form complement what I am trying to say in the poem?
7. Do I talk down to my reader?
8. Do I use archaic language that is not necessary-- "Whilst thou, my soul-alack, alack?"

Quick Note: My favorite article on writing poetry is by Margaret Atwood at [www.web.net/owtoadllecture.html](http://www.web.net/owtoadllecture.html)

Notes from the Upper Room: Watercolor Jazz in Five

I

Hot brass jazz                      winter cools                      watercolor fade gray  
Will it be soft? Starts to cool smooth, notes as one, a dark wing lifts  
Ride the bird  
sound curves through canyon  
just above water,  
just above thrash,  
in the hollows                      breathe bird breathe

II

Saxophone and Amazing Grace  
Open mouth bell before the mic-ro-phone  
jack-in-the-pulpit.  
The bass line stepping up from behind                      -electro-piano-chimes-  
FREEDOM, electric, jazz, gospel  
and the after echoes.

Watercolor blue punctuated by smaller blooms-  
red stars-white spinning into gray black night purple.

Edging on violence

ease back  
into melody, ease back  
into the prayer  
wings lifted.

III

Chaos, like water color blend, rippling pulp paper  
but gravity pulls color, down color, tangling  
one direction tangles music,  
but we are down together  
to that stepping bass.

The bass                      holds pulse                      dizzy,  
flow step flow

IV

A little too mellow, a little too green,  
"Oh, Sweet, Jesus Lord"  
The wing and then turn  
to look in the yellow eye of hawk  
flicker-dilate-slide down crook hawk beak  
open whisper, caw...SHOUT.

V

Bass twisting muscle tense ripple.  
Notes poke through.

Where the most intense color hovers                      at the top  
and all else melts down the page "wade, wade, in the water"  
swish swerve of cymbal brush  
And then, tipped saxophone slides us in.

Ride to the apex of color, sound,  
and what if the music puddles to catch us?  
Aren't you going to take a breath?

Way down now, feather white,  
soft brush strokes sweeps  
swoon child, swoon

by Elisalyn Gardner, 2003

*\*I thought if I was going to talk about poetry I better have the guts to include a poem I wrote, and this was the most recent.*

*\*\*This poem is meant to be read aloud, but I discovered today that reading the written version with too much coffee in your system Gild with Jimi Hendrix's Purple Haze as back music can also help.*

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the Writing Center?

The Writing Center is a place where students can go to receive assistance to become better, more confident writers.

### Who are the tutors?

Tutors working in the Writing Center are students who have been trained to help students with all aspects of their writing. The tutors are a diverse group of students, representing many different majors. Tutors are also familiar with many different styles and types of writing, so they can help students with papers from any department.

### Do the tutors only help with English papers?

Tutors at the Writing Center help students write English papers, scientific research papers, abstracts, personal poems, narratives, and more!

### How can the Writing Center help me?

A tutor will help with composition, grammar, structure, ideas. The tutor works closely with you through the steps of writing. However, the tutors aren't editors or proofreaders—they won't proofread your paper or act like a thesaurus and dictionary to provide different words. Be prepared with questions and specific areas which you want to work on within the paper, areas that you feel aren't as good as they should be. Also, if you are looking for someone to write your paper for you or who will allow plagiarism, you are definitely in the wrong place.

### What kinds of resources does the Writing Center have available for students to use?

At the Writing Center, we have many different reference books (dictionaries, thesauruses, grammar handbooks) available. We also have computers for your use.

### Does it Cost?

No

### Do I need to make an appointment?

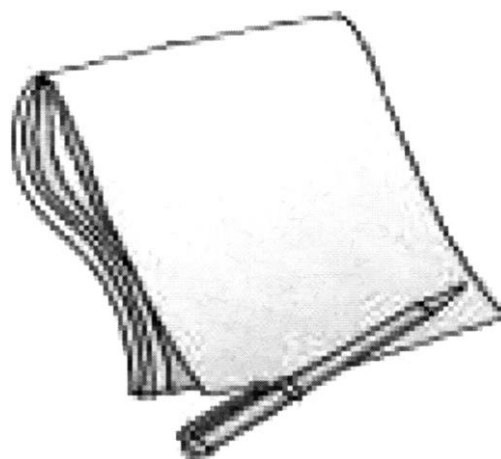
No

### Can I just drop off my paper to have you fix the grammar and then come back later?

We work face to face or through online submissions. Our goal is to help you become a better writer, not to be just a proofreading or editing service.

### How do I get more information?

Tutors routinely give in-class demonstrations of the Center's activities and resources. Ask your professor or come see us, and we can give you some more information.



## WSU Online Writing Lab (OWL)

Submitting your paper online is different than coming in for a normal tutoring session. This is how it works:

1. Go to <http://departments.weber.edu/writingcenter/Online%20Tutoring.htm>
2. Enter in your information.
3. Describe the assignment in as much detail as you can.
4. Ask three questions.
5. Copy and paste your assignment.
6. Submit it!

*If you come into the Writing Center in person, a tutor will usually go through your entire paper with you and help you improve areas you might not have even noticed. An OWL tutor will answer your three questions and tell you whether you fulfilled the assignment. If you want to go over your paper in detail, come to the Writing Center in person.*

**Good Luck!**

A WORD IS NOT  
THE SAME  
WITH ONE  
WRITER AS  
WITH ANOTHER  
ONE TEARS IT  
FROM HIS GUTS.  
THE OTHER  
PULLS IT OUT  
OF HIS  
OVERCOAT  
POCKET.

--CHARLES  
PEGUY

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Verbal Equinox  
Spring 2003 Staff

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Schaun Wheeler

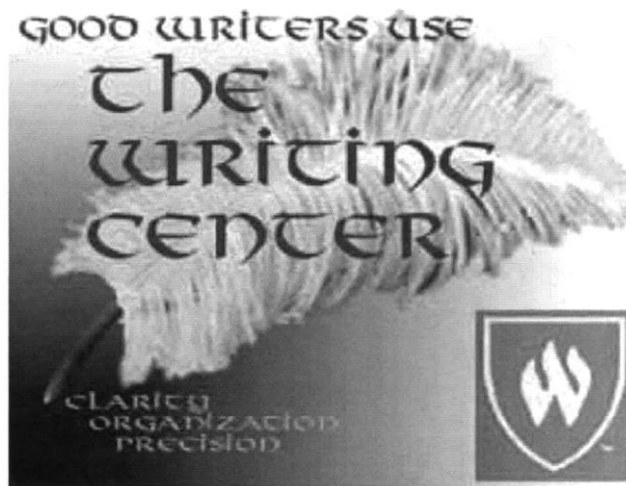
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Verbal Equinox is a bi-yearly publication aimed at helping students improve their writing and become more fully aware of the writing resources available on campus. We would love to hear from you. Direct suggestions, comments, and questions to Sylvia Newman at [snewman@weber.edu](mailto:snewman@weber.edu), or call the Writing Center at (801) 626-6463.





The Writing Center is located in the Student Services Building Room #261.

**Monday- Friday** 9:00a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**Monday-Thursday** 6:00p.m. to 9:00p.m.

**Saturday** 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

You may reach us during these hours at **(801) 626-6463**.

## *The Writing Center*

### *Weber State University*

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