

Elements of Writing Instruction II

Purposes of this session

1. Building on an understanding of the basic goals of writing instruction from our previous session, learn how to go about grading students' writing on a variety of levels.
2. Encourage parents that there are many basic elements of writing they can grade.
3. Note that there may be cases where parents should seek help with grading, and mention some avenues for these:
 - Write At Home or other online tutorial/correcting services
 - A neighbor or home schooling friend (barter) who can correct writing or tutor your child
 - A local teacher who can help you on the side, for a fee

Quick review from Session I

1. We identified four key elements of writing that parents should teach (with increasing detail and complexity) over the twelve years of a student's grade school career. These were:
 - Strong sentences:** starting simple with small students and then adding complexity through the years. We noted that correct grammar and punctuation is included here.
 - Strong paragraphs: students should learn first simple, then complex paragraph construction. In the last years of grade school, students should understand how various styles can be employed to enhance a paragraph's message.
 - Paragraph organization: we looked at the fact that paragraphs must be well-organized internally and joined in logical, fluid progressions and in proper order for the genre attempted.
 - Style: we noted that styles differ, and that this is the hardest element for many parents to teach, but that all students can note varying styles and can see how they affect written communication.
2. We made a pitch that the end game for parents in writing instruction is that their high schooler be able to write several different kinds of essays easily and well.

General aspects of grading writing

1. Make sure you give adequate instruction and goals when assigning work (at all levels).
 - If a student (and/or a parent!) doesn't clearly understand the goal, how can we expect success (or assess the result of his attempt)?
 - Rubrics are helpful here. (See hand out pages 5-6)
2. Students should be taught that writing is a process. No child should write one draft of any written piece, once paragraph writing is begun. Each child should expect to undertake these steps with all written pieces:
 - Pre-writing (see hand out page 7)
 - Drafting
 - Self-proofing (see hand out page 8)
 - Teacher input
 - Polishing
 - Presenting
3. This may seem obvious, but you must make time in your school schedule for grading papers. When is your time for grading? _____

Grades 3-6: Grading drafts of paragraphs

1. What do we look for in a good paragraph?
 - Read the paragraph through, noting both the content of each sentence and the sentence structure the student is using while you get a general idea of the student's overall performance.
 - If it is a non-fiction paragraph, note each correct fact with a check mark. (Note incorrect facts, too.)
 - If any sentences are either incomplete or run-ons, mark corrections.

- Mark, as your eye detects them, any punctuation, spelling, or grammatical errors.
 - Now, re-read the paragraph for general structure. Is there a feeling of beginning, and of closure? Are all the sentences on point? Do they all relate to the opening idea?
 - Finally, think about style. Is the style what was asked for in the assignment? Adjust overall score accordingly.
2. Do two! (See handout, page 9.)

What are the key features of essays?

As we said in Session 1, students should know what a teacher is looking for in an essay paper or test. Basically, an essay assignment shows the teacher two basic things about a student's comprehension and writing skills.

1. **Content:** Did s/he understand the substance of the subject?
 - A strong thesis statement and good supportive categories
 - Lots of facts that support the author's position
 - Solid reasoning: how s/he marshals the facts
 - Correct selection of facts—sticking to the question at hand and offering correct and complete information
 - Conclusions that hit home
2. **Writing:** How well did s/he express what he knows?
 - Use a strong and interesting variety of sentences
 - Solid paragraphs, well-formed and evenly distributed
 - Skillful use of transition words/sentences—joining paragraphs in a fluid and interesting way
 - General structure and style—arranging paragraphs in the proper order for the required genre.

Let's go through the content elements of a good analytical essay

Introductory paragraph: thesis statement and three supportive categories

1. What exactly is in a thesis statement?
 - A *statement* (not a question) of *opinion*. "The flower is red." (No.) "Red flowers are prettiest!" (Yes.)
 - A *debatable* statement; a position that the student takes at the start of the paper that is not already a proven fact. The student needs to *prove* this position by the end of the essay.
 - It is *not* a summary of the argument to be. It is more like the statement of a scientific theory.
2. What are the three necessary categories? How does the student find three supportive categories?
 - The student can often find them in the question/topic offered by the teacher.
 - If not, the student must create three supportive categories.
 - Sometimes these can come from defining terms. "All dogs bark at the moon."
 - Sometimes, categories are suggested by common themes.
 - For instance, in an analysis of leadership, one might look at an individual's successes, his character, and the recorded opinions of others.
 - In another example, a nation's actions might be analyzed in terms of their goals, their tactics, and the outcome of their enterprise.

Three middle paragraphs: the body of the expository essay

Fact selection is one of the benefits of essay writing: it is an analytical activity (sorting) that causes the student to review all facts before choosing any. Students who do not start as precise, linear thinkers are disciplined by the requirement of essay writing: they simply must stick to facts and arrange them in logical arguments in order to succeed.

1. Good expository or compare/contrast essays will contain an average of one new fact per every sentence or two!
2. Students must pepper their papers with *facts*, not long-winded opinions. College professors know the difference, and grade down for "padding"!
3. One almost can't have too many facts; facts don't deaden essays, as some beginning students may argue—bad style or poor arrangements of facts do.

How can you help with proofing drafts for content?

1. When reading drafts, look to see if the student's choices seem to be directly supporting his argument. Many young writers get "off track" easily and stray from the main course of the argument.
2. Ask the student to highlight (circle) his facts when self-proofing. This will show him how many or few he's included.
3. If you have questions about the relevance or veracity of the facts, ask the student to explain or point out his sources.
4. Make sure students adequately cite their facts (i.e. direct quotations, etc.). Teach them the MLA citation style from a current handbook, and make them use it properly.

Grading Content

Most parents who are teaching the subject matter of the essay will not have problems correcting the content. Simply verify that your student has given correct information, and enough of it, or demonstrated that he's understood the themes and concepts you've attempted to communicate. Look for:

- A strong thesis statement and good supportive categories in the introductory paragraph
- Lots of facts that support the student's position
- Correct *selection* of facts—sticking to the question at hand
- Solid reasoning: does the argument seem reasonable and reasoned?
- Conclusions that summarize the argument and hit home

Grading Structure

Structure corrections are more complex at first glance, but once you understand the basic essay formats that exist, they are not hard to correct either. Let's see if we can demystify them for you.

There are five basic kinds of analytical essays your student will need to become familiar with during his high school years, and *Tapestry* guides provide you with detailed instructions for teaching all of them. We also provide you with aids and many practice questions in the writing assignments. These five essay types are:

1. Expository (most common: facts support a thesis)
2. Compare/contrast (probably second-most common: special formats are required)
3. Persuasive (common in colleges: facts/opinions combine to support the thesis)
4. Descriptive (less common: descriptive language and details support the thesis)
5. Narrative (least common: uses stories to prove, or support, the thesis)

In all essays, the basic thing to remember in the structure is that you are going to:

1. Tell them what you're going to say.
2. Say it.
3. Tell them what you said.

Expository Essays

These are the basic structural element of an expository essay. Teach these to your student:

1. Introductory paragraph: Tell them what you are going to say
 - OPTIONAL: Start with an opening sentence that "hooks" the reader.
 - Construct a strong thesis statement, which states a *debatable* opinion.
 - Next, think of three supportive categories that prove the thesis. (These will become the topic sentences of three supportive paragraphs.) Sometimes these three ideas can be expressed in a single sentence; sometimes it takes three sentences to adequately express the supportive points.
 - One concluding/transitional sentence to end this first, topic paragraph.

2. Body of the essay: SAY IT!

- Expand the three *categories* you introduced briefly in your introductory section into three *paragraphs*
- Parallel exactly the order in which you introduce the subtopics in the introductory paragraph.
- Stylistically, this is where facility with *strong sentences* and *solid paragraphs* are important.
- Transition words and phrases within and between paragraphs will also enhance the student's argument and style.

3. Conclusion of the essay: TELL THEM what you said ~ and more!

- The simplest treatment of a concluding paragraph is to simply restate the thesis and three categories.
- End the paragraph with a sentence that signals the reader that the analysis is complete.
- Mature essayists will also add synthesis: the student will finish his concluding paragraph with an observation or thought that proceeds from his earlier arguments but is not, as such, contained therein.

Grading Expository Essays:

Let's break these down from the point of view of grading.

Sample question: "Nationalism is a force that can greatly strengthen a nation, but it can also be very dangerous when it is not controlled." Assess this statement with regard to issues during the presidency of John Quincy Adams.

First, look at your rubric handout again: page 5-6.

1. Note the categories are the same as for younger child non-fiction writing, but the point valuation is different. The emphasis is on structure and content, not style and mechanics, as with lower levels.
2. You can use a rubric like this to arrive at a grade.

Now, let's look at an actual paper. (Handout, page 10) Follow with the slides as we mark it up.

Now, apply point values to the sample essay, and arrive at a grade. (See handout and slides.)

Compare/Contrast Essay

Sample question: Compare and contrast religious views in the Northern and Middle Colonies of the United States, noting how they affected their practices of education, social action, and family.

Two structural choices for the body of the essay (both have introductory and concluding paragraphs):

1. Make three paragraphs (education, social action, and family). In each of three paragraphs, compare/contrast Northern and Middle colonies in each topic.
2. Make two longish paragraphs: first one discusses education, social action, and family in Northern Colonies, then discuss education, social action, and family for Middle Colonies.

In compare/contrast writing, it is very important to:

- Maintain strict parallelism!
- If using three paragraphs, parallel the order in which you discuss the two topics.
- If using two long paragraphs, parallel exactly the order of criteria you discuss in each long paragraph.

Let's work through our last example. (See handout, p. 11 and slides.)

Grading Rubric of NON-Analytical Non-fiction pieces (Lower Grades)

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<p>Structure</p> <p>_____/10 possible points. Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Poor, or non-existent paragraphing for student's level. <input type="checkbox"/> Facts not arranged logically under strong topic sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Did not follow assignment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphs are too few, or are widely disproportionate. <input type="checkbox"/> Some facts are not arranged logically under strong topic sentences, or are missing topic sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow assignment well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reader was left a little unclear about author's intent. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphing good, but could use some improvement. <input type="checkbox"/> Followed assignment, but some variance from instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Correct number of paragraphs for the assignment. <input type="checkbox"/> Facts are arranged in clear and logical fashion under strong topic sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Executed assignment exactly as directed.
<p>Content</p> <p>_____/10 possible points. Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Few facts/not enough research. <input type="checkbox"/> Too much "setting" and/or opinions, unsupported by facts. <input type="checkbox"/> Too many "unrelated" facts that do not belong in this paper. <input type="checkbox"/> Research was seriously deficient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Weak on facts; some are presented, but not enough to fulfill this assignment as directed. <input type="checkbox"/> Too much opinionating without supportive facts. <input type="checkbox"/> One or more paragraphs seriously light on facts. <input type="checkbox"/> Research is deficient. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Many good facts, but some key facts left out, given the topic. <input type="checkbox"/> One paragraph is not well enough rounded with facts. <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate research for the assignment is evident. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Topic is amply supplied with facts. <input type="checkbox"/> Many strong, specific, and important facts support and prove the author's point. <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent amount of research evident in the work.
<p>Writing Style</p> <p>_____/40 possible points. Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No prewriting submitted. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences are structurally inadequate. Fragments, run-ons, or misplaced phrases. <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks "flow" of style; wooden and awkwardly stated. <input type="checkbox"/> Several instances of tenses changing inappropriately, or disagreement between subjects and verbs, or missing antecedents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Inadequate pre-writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences are mixed: some are good, but many are run-ons, fragments, or awkward. <input type="checkbox"/> Transitions and "flow" need much improvement: these greatly inhibit the reader's comprehension of the author's points. <input type="checkbox"/> Instances of informal, or slang, phrases are out of place. <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong tense changes, or missing antecedents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Prewriting is adequate. <input type="checkbox"/> Good, basic writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks excellent syntax: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks excellent "flow"—transition words, ordering of phrases, and subordinate clauses. <input type="checkbox"/> Structure causes some confusion; makes paper hard to read and understand. Such mistakes as tense changes, missing antecedents: _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Extensive prewriting shows careful planning. <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Great sentence structure. <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent variety of sentence structure that serves the reader by clarifying the author's message. <input type="checkbox"/> Formal language appropriate to the essay is used throughout. <input type="checkbox"/> Good tense use, subject/verb agreement, and clear antecedents throughout.
<p>Mechanics</p> <p>_____/40 possible points. Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Messy handwriting; inattention to neatness. <input type="checkbox"/> Many punctuation errors. (Include citation errors here.) <input type="checkbox"/> Capitalization is well below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling is well below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> Did not use spell-check properly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Not as neat as the student is capable of. <input type="checkbox"/> Many punctuation errors. (Include citation errors here.) <input type="checkbox"/> Capitalization is below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling is below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> General aspect of paper is "a rush job; not well done." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Neat, but some handwriting improvement is called for (or, if the paper is computer generated, not enough attention paid to proper formats). <input type="checkbox"/> Several errors in punctuation & capitalization/citations. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling is below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> General aspect of paper is "hurried; not as good as could be." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Very neat, clean copy. <input type="checkbox"/> Almost all citations are proper. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling is done well. <input type="checkbox"/> Careful work, excellently done. <input type="checkbox"/> Almost perfect obedience to the rules of punctuation & capitalization.

Grading Rubric of Analytical Non-fiction pieces (High School)

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<p>Structure</p> <p>_____/40 possible points. Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> No clear thesis. <input type="checkbox"/> Poor, or non-existent paragraphing for student's level. <input type="checkbox"/> Facts not arranged logically under strong topic sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Did not follow assignment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis not well defined. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphs are too few, or are widely disproportionate. <input type="checkbox"/> Some facts are not arranged logically under strong topic sentences, or are missing topic sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Didn't follow assignment well. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis could be better defined, or presented earlier. <input type="checkbox"/> Reader was left a little unclear about author's intent. <input type="checkbox"/> Paragraphing good, but could use some improvement. <input type="checkbox"/> Followed assignment, but some variance from instructions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis clearly defined. <input type="checkbox"/> Correct number of paragraphs for the essay type attempted. <input type="checkbox"/> Facts are arranged in clear and logical fashion under strong topic sentences. <input type="checkbox"/> Executed assignment exactly as directed.
<p>Content</p> <p>_____/40 possible points. Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis is insupportable or wrong <input type="checkbox"/> Few facts presented. <input type="checkbox"/> Poor representation of required research. <input type="checkbox"/> Too much "setting" and/or opinions, unsupported by facts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis is not supported. <input type="checkbox"/> Weak on facts; some are presented, but not enough to prove the thesis. <input type="checkbox"/> Insufficient research. <input type="checkbox"/> One or more paragraphs seriously light on facts. <input type="checkbox"/> Too much opinionating. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Good thesis, but not the best choice of supportive categories or facts. <input type="checkbox"/> Many good facts, but some key facts left out, given the thesis. <input type="checkbox"/> One paragraph is not well enough rounded with facts. <input type="checkbox"/> Adequate research for the assignment, but not outstanding. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Strong thesis, amply supported by three strong categories. <input type="checkbox"/> Many strong, specific, and important facts support and prove the author's point. <input type="checkbox"/> Well-balanced paragraphs. <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent research is evident.
<p>Writing Style</p> <p>_____/10 possible points. Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences are structurally inadequate. Fragments, run-ons, or misplaced phrases. <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks "flow" of style; wooden and awkwardly stated. <input type="checkbox"/> Much "informal" language inserted in this formal piece of writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Several instances of tenses changing inappropriately, or disagreement between subjects and verbs, or missing antecedents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sentences are mixed: some are good, but many are run-ons, fragments, or awkward. <input type="checkbox"/> Transitions and "flow" need much improvement: these greatly inhibit the reader's comprehension of the author's argument. <input type="checkbox"/> Instances of informal, or slang, phrases are out of place. <input type="checkbox"/> Wrong tense changes, or missing antecedents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Good, basic writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks excellent syntax: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Lacks excellent "flow"—transition words, ordering of phrases, and subordinate clauses. <input type="checkbox"/> Structure causes some confusion; makes paper hard to read and understand. Such mistakes as tense changes, missing antecedents: _____ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent writing. <input type="checkbox"/> Great sentence structure. <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent variety of sentence structure that serves the reader by clarifying the author's message. <input type="checkbox"/> Formal language appropriate to the essay is used throughout. <input type="checkbox"/> Good tense use, subject/verb agreement, and clear antecedents throughout.
<p>Mechanics</p> <p>_____/10 possible points. Comments:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Messy handwriting: inattention to neatness. <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation & capitalization is well below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling is well below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> Did not use spell-check properly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Not as neat as the student is capable of. <input type="checkbox"/> Punctuation & capitalization is below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling is below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> General aspect of paper is "a rush job; not well done." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Neat, but some handwriting improvement is called for (or, if the paper is computer generated, not enough attention paid to proper formats). <input type="checkbox"/> Several errors in punctuation & capitalization (handwritten or computer). <input type="checkbox"/> Footnoting/citation errors. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling is below ability. <input type="checkbox"/> General aspect of paper is "hurried; not as good as could be." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Very neat, clean copy. <input type="checkbox"/> Almost all citations are proper. <input type="checkbox"/> Spelling is done well. <input type="checkbox"/> Careful work, excellently done. <input type="checkbox"/> Almost perfect obedience to the rules of punctuation & capitalization.

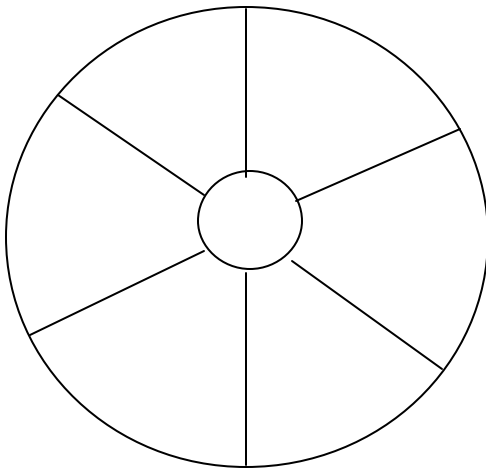
Graphic Organizers

Students should be taught to use a variety of graphic organizers. A few are summarized on this page.¹

Five W's Chart

See	Smell	Touch	Taste	Hear

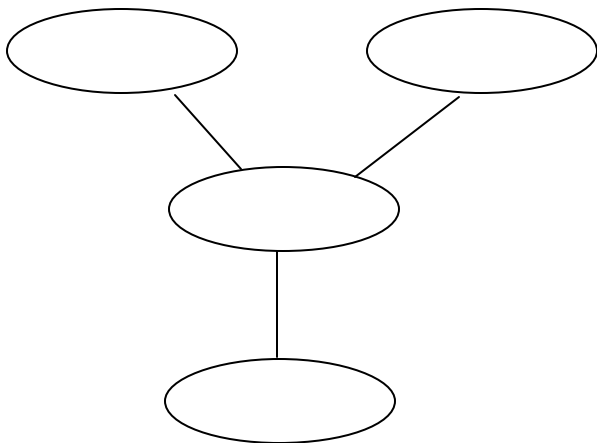
Describing Wheel



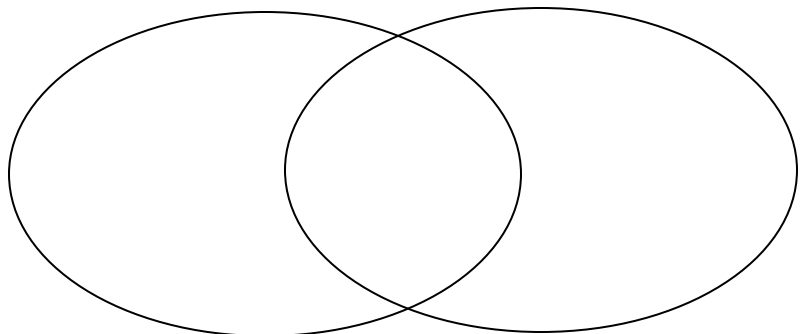
Sequence Chart

Order	What happened?
First	
Next	
Next	
Next	
Last	

Mind Map/Cluster



Venn Diagram



¹ Please note that graphic organizers (GOs) are abstract. You are asking students to select facts and relate them in a visual organizing matrix. Children younger than about 4th Grade will need lots of help with GOs, but it's still worth it to begin introducing them young. The GOs on this page are listed in order of abstract complexity. For GOs "on tap" and ready to print, <http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/index.html>.

Self Proofing Sheets

Below are two examples (one for a 3rd Grader and one for a 9th Grader) of self-proofing sheets. A valuable training tool, have your students attach such sheets to each writing assignment they hand to you.

Level 3 Proofing Sheet

- Capital letters start each sentence.
- Proper punctuation ends each sentence.
- Capitalized all proper nouns.

Level 9 Proofing Sheet for non-fiction work

- Capitalization of sentences.
- Strong, concrete words used throughout.
- Comma, semi-colon, colon, quotation mark, apostrophe placement correct.
- End Punctuation correct on each sentence.
- Spelling check.
- Strong thesis?
- Three strong supportive categories.
- Fact check. Check mark over each fact (pencil).
- Paragraphs each contain information that supports the topic sentence.
- Summary paragraph.
- Summary statement ends the piece.

Alfred the Great**Your Notes**

Alfred the Great reigned over the west Saxons in South West England from about AD 871-901. Alfred became king when his brother died fighting Danish Vikings that were currently attacking England. Right away Alfred had to defend his kingdom from the Danish Vikings. To be able to fight against the Vikings on the water, Alfred made the first English Navy. Alfred's Navy won a victory, but a few years later the Danes came pouring into England, after many months the Danes were finally defeated. Alfred the Great repaired his kingdom and started a revival of literature and learning. Because Alfred was such a great leader in peace and in war, he became the only English king known as "the Great."

Justinian's Code

What is the Justinian Code? The Justinian Code is a code of laws put together by a ruler of Eastern Rome, named Justinian I, who ruled from AD 527-565. Justinian made his law code by collecting all the laws of all the different cultures in his empire, such as the Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, Jewish, Christians, Arabs and so forth. He hired ten men to compile all the different laws into one simple complete law for everyone. The useless laws of their time were extinguished. The useful laws, that were helpful for the people, were implemented. The Justinian Law Code was made in four parts. The first part is called the Institutes, which was used as learning material for students especially those entering a legal profession. The Digest, which is the second part of The Justinian Code, teaches about trials and decisions. The third part is the Codex; it covers statutes and principles. Novels is the last section, it is for proposed new laws. The Justinian Code is a wonderful concise law that is helpful and even used in our present day!

Dangers of Nationalism**Notes:**

One of the major political issues during the presidency of John Quincy Adams was the rise of nationalism. Nationalism is a force that can greatly strengthen a nation, but it can also be very dangerous when it is not controlled. There are three major ways in which this can happen: it can cause sectionalism, national unrest, and racial divisions.

First, nationalism, when taken too far, can lead to sectionalism within a nation. It is sometimes good for an ethnic group or area to form its own nation, but often the nation will not be able to stand. During the presidency of John Quincy Adams, sectionalism was rising in the U.S.A. between the North, the South, and the West. All three groups needed each other, but they refused to concede demands, and this eventually led to civil war between the North and the South. If this rise of sectionalism had come during the Revolutionary War period, the U.S. would not have been strong enough to defeat Britain.

Secondly, nationalism can cause unrest and war, often leading to extremist movements such as communism and fascism. Two great examples of this are the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, and the fascist dictatorship established by Mussolini in Italy. Some say that nationalism is synonymous with patriotism, but patriotism implies loyalty to one's country. These were not examples of loyalty, but of unbridled lust for personal power.

Lastly, nationalism can cause serious division between cultures and ethnic groups, and often encourages racism. An argument in favor of nationalism says that people of common cultures and ethnic groups can better identify with each other, and thus, they would benefit from being their own nation. While this is partially true, it shouldn't be that way. In the Declaration of Independence, Jefferson writes, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." Humans are still just as human, in spite of lingual, cultural, and ethnic differences. We cannot ignore this.

In all this, nationalism can still be good. If it is not taken too far, it can strengthen the loyalty and patriotism of citizens. But when it is left to go out of control, the results are disastrous.

The Differing Religious Views of the Northern & Middle Colonies of America

The religious customs of the English northern colonies (Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire) of America were very different from the religious customs of the English middle colonies (Delaware, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania) of America. Yet, the religious customs and beliefs of both of these geographical locations were derived from differing interpretations of the same Bible. These interpretations shaped the way the colonists viewed education, work, and money.

The Puritan northern colonies religious views and beliefs affected their daily lives. The Puritans worked very hard to become educated so that they could read, interpret, and practice what the Bible taught; in order that they may grow in godliness. They also had a firm conviction to be beneficial with the time that God had given them. So instead of wasting time doing idle, unproductive activities; they diligently worked to increase their knowledge, serve others, and use their abilities to benefit society in some way. This is not to say that they didn't have fun or have leisure time. Instead, what I mean is that they didn't waste time indulging themselves. These puritans also had a view of how money should be used. Their view was that money should not be used for self aggrandizement; instead it should be used to help others who are poor or in need. These religious views and beliefs that the northern puritan colonists derived from the Bible greatly influenced their lives.

Although differing from the Puritans in many ways, the Amish were still devoted to living their lives in a way that was influenced and directed by scripture. Just like the Puritans, the Amish also believed in the authoritative guidance of the Bible. Yet their interpretation or what some of the scriptures meant might have been the reason for the unique turn that they took. A man named Jacob Ammon started the Amish belief that God's people should live as an all Amish "Community" of farmers so as not to be influenced by sinful enticements of the world. So, unlike the Puritans, the Amish only gave their children an eighth grade education; for this was deemed all that they needed since farming was all that they would be doing to make a living. The Amish also believed in using their time wisely, although they were not as strict as the Puritans. Like the Puritans they also were wise with the money God had given them and did not waste their money on frivolous things or clothes. Like the Puritans, the Amish were directed by their beliefs in scripture all their lives.

Both the beliefs and views of the northern colonies and middle colonies were very different, even though they followed the same Bible. It was the way they interpreted how God wanted them to live from the scriptures that made them different.