Until we understand why female athletes suffer proportionally more concussions than their male counterparts, we can't know the most effective ways to protect them. *consequences of question*

The discrepancy appears to be due in part to differences in the protective equipment worn by male and female athletes as well as to different standards of monitoring, reporting, and care when injuries occur. *your tentative main point*

Sketchy as it is, this introduction is enough to start you on track. In your final draft, you'll revise it to state your problem more completely (see chapter 16).

12.1.2 Identify Key Concepts That Will Run Through Your Whole Paper

For your paper to seem coherent, readers must see a few key concepts running through all of its parts. You might find them among the terms you used to categorize your notes, but they must include keywords from the sentences stating your problem and main point. On the introduction page, circle four or five words that express those concepts. Ignore words that name your general topic; focus on those relevant to your specific question:

employment, job satisfaction, recent SE Asian immigrants, cross-cultural, length of residence, prior economic level

If you find few key terms, your topic and point may be too general (review 8.2.1). List those key terms at the top of each storyboard page, and keep them in mind as you draft.

12.1.3 Plan the Body of Your Paper

1. **Sketch background and define terms.** After the introduction page of your storyboard, add a page on which you outline necessary background. You may have to define terms, spell out your problem or review research in more detail, set limits on your project, locate your problem in a larger historical or social context, and so on. Keep it short.
2. **Create a page for each major section of your paper.** At the top of each of these pages, write the point that the rest of that section supports, develops, or explains. Usually, this will be a reason supporting your main claim.
3. **Find a suitable order.** When you assembled your argument (see 9.1), you ordered its parts in a way that may have been clear to you. But when you plan a draft, you must order them in a way that meets the needs of your readers. When you're not sure what that order should be, consider these options. The first two are based on your topic:
   - **Part-by-part.** If you can break your topic into its parts, you can deal with each in turn, but you must still order those parts in a way that helps readers understand them—by their functional relationships, hierarchy, and so on.
   - **Chronological.** This is the simplest: earlier to later or cause to effect.

   These next six are based on your readers' knowledge and understanding.
   - **Short to long, simple to complex.** Most readers prefer to deal with simple issues before they work through more complex ones.
   - **More familiar to less familiar.** Most readers prefer to read about more familiar issues before they read about new ones.
   - **Less contestable to more contestable.** Most readers move more easily from what they agree with to what they don't.
   - **More important to less important (or vice versa).** Readers prefer to read more important reasons first (but those reasons may have more impact if they come last).
   - **Earlier understanding to prepare for later understanding.** Readers may have to understand some events, principles, definitions, and so on before they understand something else.
   - **General analysis followed by specific applications.** Readers may have to understand the outlines of your overall position before they can follow how you apply it to specific texts, events, situations, and so on.

Often these principles cooperate: what readers agree with and easily understand might also be short and familiar. But these principles may also conflict: readers might reject most quickly reasons

that are most important. Whatever your order, it must reflect *your readers'* needs, not the order that the material seems to impose on itself (as in an obvious compare-contrast organization), least of all the order in which those reasons occurred to you.

Finally, make the principle of order you choose clear by sketching at the top of each page words that show it: *First . . . , second . . . ; Later . . . , finally . . . ; More important . . . ; A more complex issue is . . . ; As a result . . .* Don't worry if these terms feel awkward. At this point, they're for your benefit, not your readers'. You can revise or even delete them from your final draft.

12.1.4 Plan Each Section and Subsection

1. **Highlight the key terms in each section and subsection.** Just as your paper needs an introduction, so does each of its sections. Earlier we told you to state the point of each section at the top of its storyboard page. Now, just as you picked out key terms to run through your whole paper, circle the ones that uniquely distinguish this section from all the others; they should be in the sentence that states the point of that section. If you cannot find terms to distinguish a section, look closely at how it contributes to the whole. It may offer little or nothing.
2. **Indicate where to put evidence, acknowledgments, warrants, and summaries.** Add these parts to the storyboard page for each section. They may, in turn, need to be supported by their own arguments.
   - **Evidence.** Most sections consist of evidence supporting a reason. If you have different kinds of evidence supporting the same reason, group and order them in a way that makes sense to readers. Note where you may have to explain your evidence—where it came from, why it's reliable, exactly how it supports a reason.
   - **Acknowledgments and responses.** Imagine what readers might object to, then outline a response. Responses may be subarguments with a claim, reasons, evidence, and even another response to an imagined response to your response.
   - **Warrants.** Generally speaking, if you need a warrant, state it before you offer its claim and supporting reason. This following argument, for example, needs a warrant if it's intended for nonexperts in Elizabethan social history:

     Since most students at Oxford University in 1580 signed documents with only their first and last names,*reason* most of them must have been commoners.*claim*

     That argument is clearer to everyone (even experts) when introduced by a warrant:

     In late sixteenth-century England, when someone was not a gentleman but a commoner, he did not add "Mr." or "Esq." to his signature.*warrant* Most students at Oxford University in 1580 signed documents with only their first and last names,*reason* so most of them must have been commoners.*claim*

If you think readers might question your warrant, make an argument supporting it.

If your paper is long and "fact-heavy" with dates, names, events, or numbers, you might end each major section by briefly summarizing the progress of your argument. What have you established in that section? How does your argument shape up so far? If in your final draft those summaries seem clumsy, cut them.

12.1.5 Sketch a Working Conclusion

State your point again at the top of a conclusion page of your storyboard. After it, if you can, sketch its significance (another answer to *So what?*).

In doing all this, you may discover that you can't use all the notes you collected. That doesn't mean you wasted time. Research is like gold mining: dig up a lot, pick out a little, toss the rest. Ernest Hemingway said that you know you're writing well when you discard stuff you know is good—but not as good as what you keep.

12.2 AVOIDING THREE COMMON BUT FLAWED PLANS

Not all plans are equally good. Our first efforts often track our thinking or activities as researchers but not the experiences of readers.

of the whole, its structure, and, most important, why they should read your paper in the first place. Then they use that sense of the whole and its aims to interpret its parts. So when you revise, it makes sense to attend first to your overall organization, then to sections, then to the coherence of your paragraphs and the clarity of your sentences, and, finally, to matters of spelling and punctuation. In reality, of course, no one revises so neatly. We all revise as we go, correcting spelling as we rearrange our argument, clarifying evidence as we revise a paragraph. But when you systematically revise top-down, from global structure to local sentences and words, you are more likely to read as your readers will than if you start at the bottom, with words and sentences, and work up. You will also revise more efficiently, because you won't spend time fine-tuning whole sections that you later decide to rearrange or even cut.

13.2 REVISING YOUR FRAME

Readers must recognize three things instantly and unambiguously:

- where your introduction ends
- where your conclusion begins
- what sentence in one or both states your main point

To ensure that readers recognize these, do this:

1. **Put an extra space after your introduction and before your conclusion.** If your field approves, put headings at those joints so that readers can't miss them.
2. **State your main point at or close to the end of your introduction.** Then compare that point with the one in your conclusion. They should at least not contradict each other. Nor should they be identical: make the one in your conclusion more specific and contestable.
3. **Include in the point sentence of your introduction key terms that name concepts and themes that run through your paper.** Do this not only when your point sentence announces your main claim but also if it is just a launching point (see 12.1.1, 16.4.2).

For example, consider this introductory paragraph (much abbreviated). What does it imply about the point of the paper?

> In the eleventh century, the Roman Catholic Church initiated several Crusades to recapture the Holy Land. In a letter to King Henry IV in the year 1074, Gregory VII urged a Crusade but failed to carry it out. In 1095 his successor, Pope Urban II, gave a speech at the Council of Clermont in which he also called for a Crusade, and in the next year, in 1096, he initiated the First Crusade. In this paper I will discuss the reasons for the Crusades.

The closest thing to a point sentence appears to be that vague last one. But it merely announces the Crusades as a topic.

Here are the first few sentences from the first paragraph of the conclusion (again, much abbreviated). What is its point?

> As these documents show, popes Urban II and Gregory VII did urge the Crusades to restore the Holy Land to Christian rule. But their efforts were also shrewd political moves to unify the Roman and Greek churches and to prevent the breakup of the empire from internal forces threatening to tear it apart. In so doing, they . . .

The point sentence in the conclusion seems to be the second one ("But their efforts . . . apart"). That point is specific, substantive, and plausibly contestable. We could add a shortened version of that point to the end of the introduction, or we could write a new sentence for the introduction that, while not revealing the full point, would at least introduce the key concepts of the paper more clearly:

> In a series of documents, the popes proposed their Crusades to restore Jerusalem to Christendom, but their words suggest other issues involving **political concerns** about European and Christian **unity** in the face of **internal forces** that were **dividing** them.

13.3 REVISING YOUR ARGUMENT

Once you determine that the outer frame of your paper will work for readers, analyze its argument section by section. We know

this seems to repeat earlier steps, but once drafted, your argument may look different from the way it did in your storyboard or outline.

13.3.1 Identify the Substance of Your Argument

Does the structure of your argument match the structure of your paper?

1. **Is each reason supporting your main claim the point of a section of its own?** If not, the organizing points of your paper may conflict with the structure of your argument.
2. **Do you strike the right balance between reasons and evidence?** In each section, identify everything that counts as evidence, all the summaries, paraphrases, quotations, facts, figures, graphs, tables—whatever you report from a primary or secondary source. If what you identify as evidence and its explanation are less than a third or so of a section, you may not have enough evidence to support your reasons. If you have lots of evidence but few or no reasons, you may have just a data dump.

13.3.2 Evaluate the Quality of Your Argument

What might cause your readers to reject your argument?

1. **Is your evidence reliable?** In chapter 9, we said that evidence should be accurate and precise, sufficient and representative, and authoritative (see 9.4). If you are close to a final draft, it may be too late to find more or better evidence. But you can check other matters:
   - Check your data and quotations against your notes.
   - Make sure your readers see how quotations and data relate to your claim.
   - Be sure you haven't skipped intermediate subreasons between a major reason and its supporting evidence.
2. **Have you appropriately qualified your argument?** Can you drop in a few appropriate hedges like *probably, most, often, may,* and so on?
3. **Does your paper read like a conversation with peers or colleagues asking hard but friendly questions?** If it reads like a contest between competitors or if you haven't acknowledged alternative views or objections, go back through your argument and imagine a sympathetic but skeptical reader asking, *Why do you believe that? Are you really making that strong a point? Could you explain how this evidence relates to your point? But what about . . . ?* (Review 10.1–2.) Then answer the most important ones.
4. **Have you expressed all the warrants you should?** There is no easy test for this question. Once you identify each section and subsection of your argument, write in the margin its most important unstated warrant. Then ask whether readers will accept it. If not, you have to state and support it.

13.4 REVISING THE ORGANIZATION OF YOUR PAPER

Once you are confident about the outer frame of your paper and the substance of its argument, make sure that readers will find the whole paper coherent. To ensure that they do, check the following:

1. **Do key terms run through your whole paper?**
   - Circle key terms in the main point in your introduction and conclusion.
   - Circle those same terms in the body of your paper.
   - Underline other words related to concepts named by those circled terms.

Here again is that concluding paragraph about the Crusades, with its keywords circled:

> As these documents show, popes Urban II and Gregory VII did urge the Crusades to restore the Holy Land to Christian rule. But their efforts were also shrewd political moves to unify the Roman and Greek churches and to prevent the breakup of the empire from internal forces threatening to tear it apart.

If readers don't see at least one of those key terms in most paragraphs, they may think your paper wanders.

If you find a passage that lacks key terms, you might shoehorn a few in. If that's difficult, you may have gotten off track and need to rewrite or even discard that passage.

2. **Is the beginning of each section and subsection clearly signaled?** Could you quickly and confidently insert headings to mark where your major sections begin? If you can't, your readers probably won't recognize your organization. If you don't use headings, add an extra space at the major joints.
3. **Does each major section begin with words that signal how that section relates to the one before it?** Readers must not only recognize where sections begin and end, but understand why they are ordered as they are. Have you signaled the logic of your order with phrases such as *More important . . . , The other side of this issue is . . . , Some have objected that . . . , One complication is . . . ,* or even just *First, . . . Second, . . .* ?
4. **Is it clear how each section relates to the whole?** For each section ask: *What question does this section answer?* If it doesn't answer one of the five questions whose answers constitute an argument (7.1), does it create a context, explain a background concept or issue, or help readers in some other way? If you can't explain how a section relates to your point, consider cutting it.
5. **Is the point of each section stated in a brief introduction (preferably) or in its conclusion?** If you have a choice, state the point of a section at the end of its introduction. Never bury it in the middle. If a section is longer than four or five pages, you might conclude by restating your point and summarizing your argument, especially if your argument is fact-heavy with names, dates, or numbers.
6. **Do terms that unify each section run through it?** Each section needs its own key terms to unify and uniquely distinguish it from the others. To test that, create a heading that uniquely distinguishes that section from all the others. Repeat step 1 for each section: find the point sentence and circle in it the key terms for that section (do not circle terms you circled in the main point of the whole paper). Check whether those terms run through that section. If you find no terms that differ from those running through the whole, then your readers may not see what new ideas that section contributes. If you find that some of the terms also run through another section, the two sections may only repeat each another. If so, consider combining them.

13.5 CHECKING YOUR PARAGRAPHS

You may have learned that every paragraph should begin with a topic sentence and be directly relevant to the section in which it appears. Those are good rules of thumb, but applied too strictly they can make your writing seem stiff. The important thing is to structure and arrange your paragraphs so that they lead your readers through the conversation you are orchestrating. Open each paragraph with a sentence or two that signal its key concepts. Doing that will help readers better understand what follows. If your opening doesn't also state the paragraph's point, then your last sentence should. Never bury the point in the middle.

Paragraphs vary in length depending on the type of writing in which they appear. For example, they tend to be shorter in brief research reports and longer in, say, critical essays or book chapters. Paragraphs should be long enough to develop their points but not so long that readers lose focus, which is simply to say they should be "just right" (another Goldilocks moment). If you find yourself stringing together choppy paragraphs of just a few lines, it may mean your points are not well developed. If you find yourself rolling out very long paragraphs of more than a page, it may mean that you are digressing. You can sometimes vary the lengths of your paragraphs for effect: use short paragraphs to highlight transitions or statements that you want to emphasize.

Some writers find it more natural to think not about their paragraphs but about their paragraph breaks. Use your paragraph breaks as you would the pauses in a conversation, for example, to rest after you make a strong point, to give your reader a moment to process a complex passage, or to signal a transition to a new idea.