PIED PIPER OF SEVENTH AVENUE

It is rush hour in a New York city subway station. A train is waiting, rumbling, impatient to go. I dash toward the train. The doors begin to close. Suddenly I find myself inside and the car lurches forward. Bright advertising posters scream at me in the stark ‘fluorescent light, and 40 robots sit stolidly ignoring the earsplitting shriek of the subway train’s wheels. Each stiff robot has his jaw clamped tight and his eyes fixed on his newspaper. And each seems to say, “Don’t talk to me! I am not really here!”

Miraculously, one seat is vacant, and I plop down and stiffly open my own newspaper. My eye momentarily strays to the gentleman on my right. Suddenly I know why this seat was empty: the man next to me is a genuine weirdo.

Physically he is not weird at all -- a portly, middle-aged man with an open shirt and baggy pants long overdue for laundering. It is what he is doing, however, that is strange: he grasps an apparently ordinary typewriter case and painstakingly places it between his knees, balancing it with great care. Then from an inside pocket he produces a pair of old drumsticks, and sets to work on the case!

His dreamy eyes seem to focus on some invisible bandleader as his sticks bang and rattle with an enthusiasm rarely seen even in the most swinging night clubs.

I want to get up and run. My fellow robot-passengers seem to have grown more tense and distant, trying to ignore the gay drumming of this madman. How dare he interrupt the private thoughts and reading of so many people? Yet in spite of my irritation, I am curious about this man’s motives and fascinated by his style.

I am not a musician, but I quickly realize that he is good. Not just interestingly incongruous, but inventive, imaginative. Rhythms fly. Tempos alter abruptly. Those thin sticks miraculously beat the plastic of the typewriter case. He drops a stick, and suddenly the performance stops. The silence is almost respectful as he picks up the stick and carefully examines it to see if it is chipped or cracked.

Then just as suddenly he begins again. Without a glance at any of his audience, without even appearing to notice that there are other people near him, he pounds furiously,
eyes closed. Then he throws one stick in the air! Then the other stick! And I think, ‘Now he has gone too far . ..’ But he catches them both with indolent ease and never misses a beat.

I notice my fellow passengers again. Robots? Everyone wears a radiant smile. Smiles on New Yorkers such as I’ve never known. Grins! Grins with teeth! One man is tapping his fingers on his knee; another is tapping his foot; a girl’s head bobs in time to the rhythm. We look at each other, smiling. We have become a community, a group of friends.

All this happened in less than five minutes. At 72nd Street our nameless drummer quietly gathered his possessions and departed, answering with a dignified nod to my applause.

Weird? Mad? A frustrated genius too poor to buy a drum? I don’t know. I prefer to remember him as the Pied Piper of Seventh Avenue.

My smile lasted all the way to 86th Street.
A biography, or an autobiography, is the record of a person’s life—generally a person who has had unusual and exciting experiences. In reading a biography, you are interested chiefly in the person himself. The same is true in writing about a biography; you concentrate on the subject himself. But not all biographies are alike; they are written all for different reasons.

There are many kinds of biography. Some of them are discussed below:

1. The kind of biography which is written as a tribute to someone might be called an official biography. It is written to celebrate the outstanding achievements of the subject. Sometimes biographies of this kind are actually commissioned by organizations who want to honor their founders and leaders.

2. You probably read a romantic biography, the life of someone exciting, glamorous, romantic. This kind of biography emphasizes personality and temperament—the private and public life of a famous person. Painters, poets, composers, revolutionary leaders, actors, and actresses, singers, explorers are the people who generally afford material to the writer of romantic biography. In the romantic biography, we learn about a way of life entirely different from our own we escape from the common place and the ordinary.

3. Biographies written by scholars, historians, and professors are more likely to be social biographies, in which the author shows his subject as representative of the time in which he lived. Quite often the social nature of such a book is indicated in its subtitle: Albert Einstein, His Life and Times, or Franklin D. Roosevelt. The Coming of the New Deal. The man is portrayed not only as a personality but as someone who influenced his age.

4. The biography that analyzes one man to show what many men are alike is the psychological biography. The biographer tries to show the man as he really was, the whole man, his failings as well as his virtues.
5. Many biographies are a combination of two or more types, particularly of the romantic and the psychological, or of the romantic and the social. A rather special and very popular kind of biography is the type which combines the story of a man’s life with a critical study of his work. This treatment is particularly appropriate for writers, painters, and composers.

When you write about biography, determine what kind it is, and in your composition or report comment on how the author has fulfilled his purpose. But remember that the subject of a biography is a personal life. Include in your paper sufficient detail to make the person stand out clearly.

Exercise 1

Read the following biography, and then determine what kind it is. Write two paragraphs on how the author has fulfilled his purpose.

John Dewey, probably the most influential of all American philosophers, was born in Vermont in 1859. After graduation from the University of Vermont, he received a Ph.D. from The John Hopkins University and taught at a number of major universities, including the University of Chicago and Columbia. Before his death in 1952 he had gained an international reputation for his pragmatic approach to philosophy, psychology, and liberal politics. Among his important books in these areas are: How We Think (1910), Reconstruction in Philosophy (1920), Experience and Nature (1925), and Logic: The Theory of Inquiry (1934). The commission which he headed, to investigate the Moscow trials of 1936-37, is an example of the practical approach to political action which characterized him throughout his life and made him a controversial figure among liberals (though universally condemned by Communists).

In all likelihood, Dewey’s most enduring influence is in the field of education. Believing in the unity of theory and practice, Dewey not only wrote on the subject, but for a time participated in the “laboratory school” for children connected with the University of Chicago. His chief early in this field, Democracy and Education (1916), was the most comprehensive statement of his position. Experience and Education, written more than two decades later, shows how Dewey reformulated his ideas as a result of the intervening experience of the progressive schools and in the light of the criticisms his theories had received.
sequently, it represents the best concise statement on education by the most important educational theorist of the twentieth century. Moreover, it is probably the simplest and most readable extended statement of this subject that Dewey ever made.

John Dewey, philosopher of growth, change, and experimentation, may long remain one of the world’s most frequently misunderstood and misinterpreted scholars. A controversial figure, he lived to see his influence felt in such diverse areas as teaching methods and jurisprudence, psychology and ethics, logic and law, aesthetics and international relationships, religion and economics, philosophy and sociology. He brought about a profound revolution in education, not only in America, but in much of the rest of the world. He has been called by many names: psychologist, educator, philosopher, pragmatist, instrumentalist, free-thinker, humanist, pluralist, naturalist, theist, liberal, radical, reconstructionist, pacifist, meliorist, relativist, empiricist, and so forth. The list could be extended.

It does not seem probable that a valid assessment of Dewey’s influence can be made during the present century. It will remain for historians, favored by the greater perspective afforded by time and distance, to estimate that influence from the vantage point of a later era. For the present, the many disagreements will persist. But among those who dispute, there nevertheless is general agreement on some points; for no one doubts Professor Dewey’s rightful place among the great humanitarians, among those who hold strong faith in the improvability of social man, or among those who believe in the meliorative powers of human intelligence applied to the solution of man’s problems. Nor will anyone question his position among the respectors of human dignity or among those who see man’s spiritual nature as thriving best only when the mind can follow its quest without fear and in an atmosphere of free inquiry. Nor, finally, will anyone question Dewey’s place among those men of comprehensive intellect to whom we sometimes refer as “world scholars.”
Exercise 2

Read at least one biography in its entirety. Then write a three-paragraph composition in which you (1) review the life of the subject, (2) describe his accomplishments, and (3) show how the biographer has made his life interesting.

Exercise 3

Write a short biography, 400-500 words, of one of the members of your family. Interview your subject and get as many interesting and important facts and events as you can. List these facts, perhaps the five or six most important, in a definite plan of organization. Probably your organization would follow the chronological order in which the events happened. Do what you can to make your subject stand out as a definite and interesting personality; do not just relate events one after the other.
Another type of writing about what you read is the report on a topic which you have chosen or on which you have been assigned to do independent research. Frequently, such reports will be assigned in courses other than your English class. But in English, particularly in your study of literature, you may have occasion to do research reports.

Some of these reports might be on the career of a particular author, such as Edgar Allan Poe, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, or Mark Twain. You might be asked to prepare a report on a number of famous poets and their chief contributions to world poetry. Finally, it is quite possible that you may be asked to do a report on some area of special interest to you, such as a career, a hobby, or a controversial political topic.

The research report requires you to do rather extensive and varied reading. Much of your information will be found in an assortment of books: books written only about the subject itself, such as biographies; general books, such as encyclopedias; and also magazines of various kinds. You will need to find the information and, most important, you will need to make notes on the information you uncover in order to use it in a report.

Taking Notes. Your reference reading and note-taking is the first assignment you have, once you have established your topic. Try to use several sources from which to gather your information, remembering that material from only one source does not constitute a research report.

When you have found a likely source, read it through and take notes on your reading. Here, the 3 x 5 cards can be extremely useful, for they are easy to carry, easy to write on, and easy to store. Remember that the information you place on cards is for your own reference as you write: these cards are not intended to be your report. Therefore, the information should be brief.
Each card should relate to some particular part of your topic only. If there are five or six aspects of your topic, you should have that many piles of 3 \times 5 cards, since you will probably fill several cards for each section of the paper.

Finally, before proceeding with notes, you would be wise to have questions that you are seeking the answers to. You might even want to write these questions at the top of each note card. Remember to use your own words in taking notes. If you copy the exact words of a source, you must use quotation marks and state that it is borrowed material. Otherwise you are copying and not taking notes.

Once you have your information, use the cards with notes to write your outline. More than in any other kind of writing you do in school, an outline is essential in preparing a research report. Use it as a guide, filling in with the material from your notes. Again, be sure to use your own words. Quote directly when you need to, but always give your source.

The Bibliography. Most report in school do draw upon several sources, and it is necessary to give credit to these sources. Credit is given usually in a bibliography. A bibliography is simply a list of books or other printed materials. The bibliography generally comes at the end of the report, and is set up in a special style.

1. The name of the author, the last name first
2. The title of the book (underlined) as it appears on the title page of the book
3. The place of publication and the name of the publisher
4. The date of publication
5. Page references; that is, if your report draws upon material from only pages 4 through 17, you should note this fact

Here is an example of a way to set up a bibliography. Styles vary somewhat, but this form is generally accepted.

If the source is a magazine, a slightly different procedure is necessary. Give the author’s name, last name first, the title of the article (in quotation marks), the name of the magazine (underlined), the pages on which the article was found. Here is an example.


Use the same rule for encyclopedias.

**Final order of contents.** The research paper should contain all the parts in the order your instructor has assigned. Typically, the completed paper has the following units:

1. **Title page.** The title of the paper should be centered; your name, the date, the course number, and any other information your instructor requests should be put in the lower right-hand corner.

2. Outline. The thesis sentence and the outline in the form assigned (topic or sentence outline). The revised outline should correspond to the organization of the final paper.

3. **Text of the paper.** The final copy of the paper, complete with footnotes, charts, and diagrams wherever needed. The numbering of the text usually begins on the second page, with Arabic numerals centered at the top or at the top right-hand corner.

4. **Bibliography.** The final bibliography should follow the last page of the text, starting on a separate page.

The following pages present a sample student paper, complete with outline, text, and bibliography. See pages 89 for a key to the symbols in the margin of the text.
F. Scott Fitzgerald: Spokesman of the Jazz Age

By

P.N. Wisdom

English 402, Section 1
Dr. P. Noisaengsri
November 28, 1974

Department of English
Faculty of Humanities
Ramkhamhaeng University
F. Scott Fitzgerald: Spokesman of the Jazz Age

Thesis sentence: As an honest commentary on his own life and on the era in which he lived, F. Scott Fitzgerald’s work represents a valuable contribution to American literature.

I. Fitzgerald grew up with a desire for wealth but also with a poor person’s distrust of the rich.
   A. His family was proud of its background but had little money.
   B. He was educated in expensive schools, where he felt at a disadvantage among his rich classmates.
   C. His early feelings about wealth are seen in “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz” and “Winter Dreams.”

II. World War I brought optimism, then disillusionment.
   A. Fitzgerald enlisted in 1917 and, while stationed in Alabama, met and became engaged to the wealthy and luxury-loving Zelda Sayre.
   B. His hopes for marriage and for a writing career were both temporarily dashed after the war.

III. Fitzgerald’s writing and life during the twenties made him a symbol of the Jazz Age.
   A. Publication of This Side of Paradise (1920), a novel of the postwar generation, made him rich and famous overnight.
   B. He married Zelda and plunged into an irresponsible, pleasure-seeking life, first in New York and later in Europe, where the couple’s contiued extravagances forced him to resort to commercialized writing.
   C. While in Europe he also wrote his best novel, The Great Gatsby, whose hero reflects Fitzgerald’s conflicting feelings towards his own life.
IV. The end of the twenties brought a tragic decline in Fitzgerald’s personal life and in his literary career.
   A. Zelda had a mental collapse from which she never recovered.
   B. Fitzgerald’s writing became discredited along with the values of the twenties, and he began a progressive physical and mental decline.
   C. Fitzgerald’s disillusionment during this period is reflected in “Babylon Revisited.”

V. Though thoroughly discredited at the time of his death in 1940, Fitzgerald made a lasting contribution to American literature.
   A. He epitomized the ideals of the Jazz Age but at the same time remained critically detached from them.
   B. He honestly portrayed a way of life that was his personal ruin.
F. Scott Fitzgerald: Spokesman of the Jazz Age

In the closing lines of *This Side of Paradise*, the novel that made him rich and famous overnight, F. Scott Fitzgerald described his generation as one that “grown up to find all gods dead, all wars fought, all faith in men shaken.” With the war over, America was setting back to Harding “normalcy” with reckless abandon. Money was plentiful, and material pleasures were wantonly pursued. This was the era of the flapper and the Charleston, of the raccoon coat and the speakeasy, and era when playing the stock market was a kind of national Bingo. More than any other writer, Fitzgerald became the literary spokesman of the Jazz Age. And, because he embodied so many of its characteristics himself, his writings were a chronicle of his personal life as well.

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on September 24, 1896, the only son of Edward and Mary Fitzgerald. The father was a weak, pleasant man who had little success in business, and the family was for some time supported by a small inheritance of Francis’s mother. Fitzgerald, an eccentric domineering her family made the boy feel that he was of well-to-do stock, an assurance belied by the family’s straightened circumstances. A maiden aunt paid to send him to Newman, an expensive prep school, where he was painfully conscious of being “one of the poorest boys in a rich boys’ school.”

Although he tried hard to

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2 Arthur Mirener, “Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald,” *Dictionary of American Biography*, XXII (New York, 1958) 189. Unless otherwise noted, all biographical data in this paper are from this source.

win praise, his aggressiveness and occasional unwillingness to conform made him unpopular. As was to be true of him throughout life, he was drawn to the rich, but he maintained a proletarian’s distrustful attitude toward them. A story written in 1922, “The Diamond as Big as the Ritz, expressed these early feelings in fantasy form: a young man, spending the holidays with a wealthy schoolmate, learns that the mountain on which the estate stands covers the largest diamond in the world and that he will never be permitted to return to the outside world to reveal the secret. The story ends with a romantic escape as the mountain is blown up.\(^4\)

When the time came to enter college, Fitzgerald chose Princeton, traditionally a social, rich boys’ school. Again he strove to be accepted, to become part of their world. Like Dexter Green, the hero of “Winter Dreams,” Fitzgerald wanted “not association with glittering things and glittering people --he wanted the glittering things themselves.”\(^5\) He joined numerous organizations, became a member of a fashionable fraternity, and acquired a moderate campus renown by writing two musical comedies for the Triangle Club. His dream of being elected president of the club and becoming top man at school was shattered, however, when failing grades forced him to withdraw.

The war came in 1917, and Fitzgerald was among the first to enlist. Perhaps, like Dexter Green, “he was one of those young thousands who greeted the war with a certain amount of relief welcoming the liberation from webs of tangled emotion.”\(^6\)

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5 Stories, p. 130.
6 Ibid., p. 143.
While stationed outside Montgomery, Alabama, he met and became engaged to Zelda Sayre, the daughter of a justice of the Alabama Supreme Court. Like most of Fitzgerald’s heroines, she was beautiful, restless, intelligent, and addicted to a life of luxury. After being discharged in 1919, Fitzgerald optimistically set out of New York to become a famous writer, but had to settle for a ninety-dollar-a-month advertising job. Zelda, after some wavering, broke their engagement, causing Fitzgerald the second major disappointment of his life. Distraught, he went back to St. Paul to resume writing a novel he had begun at Princeton.

The publication in March 1920 of This Side of Paradise, a novel about the pleasure-seeking postwar generation, brought Fitzgerald immediate success. Suddenly, popular magazines were clamoring for the short stories they had previously rejected, and money seemed to pour in. In April, Zelda, having reconsidered Fitzgerald’s proposal, came to New York to marry him. At once the couple plunged into the giddy, irresponsible whirl of cafe society, as if determined to be living symbols of the Jazz Age:

They rode down Fifth Avenue on the tops of taxis because it was hot or dove into the fountain at Union Square or tried to undress at the Scandals, or, in sheer delight at the splendor of New York, jumped, dead sober, into the Pulitzer fountain in front of the Plaza. Fitzgerald got in fights with waiters and Zelda danced on people’s dinner tables.

From 1920 to 1925 Fitzgerald’s income was $113,000 and practically the entire amount was spent on extravagances, leaving him with his old feeling of financial insecurity. In 1924 he and Zelda moved to Europe, where expenses were lower. But Paris and the Riviera were as drunk with spending as New York, and Fitzgerald was forced to turn out a good deal of hasty, commercialized writing to pay off a

7 Mizener, The Far Side of Paradise, p. 117.
mounting pile of bills. Now that he was on the merry-go-round, he found it impossible to get off.

During his stay in Europe, Fitzgerald, also wrote what is generally considered his finest work, *The Great Gatsby*. The hero of this novel, a tragic victim of romantic illusions, in many ways resembles Fitzgerald. Born James Gatz in North Dakota, he seeks association with the rich, apes their manners, and creates the glittering Hay Gatsby from “his Platonic conception of himself.” Stationed in the South during the war, he falls in love with Daisy, a wealthy, irresponsible belle, but his poverty stands between them, and Daisy marries Tom Buchanan, a rich profligate. Gatsby is unwilling to give up his dreams grown rich through bootlegging and convinced that money can buy everything, he lavishes a fortune in winning Daisy back. But in the end he is destroyed by the “vast carelessness” of the rich and his false dream of “the orgiastic future.” As Lionel Trilling points out, Gatsby, “divided between power and dream,” represents not only the anomaly in Fitzgerald’s character, but in the American character as well.

As the dream world of the twenties abruptly ended with the stock market crash of 1929, Fitzgerald’s own life entered a tragic decline. In 1930 Zelda suffered a mental collapse from which she never fully recovered; the rest of her life was spent in mental hospitals. Both critics and public turned angrily to the ideals of the orgiastic twenties and everything associated with them. Publishers began to reject Fitzgerald’s writings, and he started drinking heavily. Still in his early thirties, he found himself an overnight has-been, as he had once been an overnight success.

The pathos of his life at this period is reflected in “Babylon Revisited,” in which the central character, a reformed alcoholic, has lost his wife and the custody

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10. Ibid., pp. 180, 182.
of his child. Returning to Paris after the crash, he finds the gay crowds of the twenties gone, except for a few dissipated cronies. He sees in retrospect the illusory life of his youth, where “the snow of twenty-nine wasn’t real snow. If you didn’t want it to be snow, you just paid some money.”

Fitzgerald’s despair and heavy drinking resulted in a complete physical and mental breakdown in 1935. In 1940 he died in Hollywood, where he had been trying to extricate himself from debt by writing hack scripts for movies. When he died, the obituaries made it clear that most people regarded him as a relic from a discredited age, the leader, as Westbrook Pegler put it, of a “cut of juvenile crying-drunks.”

Although Fitzgerald was tragically deluded by wealth and bogus ideals, he was also a critic of them. Edmund Wilson, a lifelong friend, observed as early as 1922 that “Fitzgerald is romantic, but also cynical about romance. He casts himself in the role of the playboy he maliciously mocks.” As Fitzgerald himself once wrote, “the test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideals in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function. One should be able to see that things are hopeless and yet be determined to make them otherwise.” Because he was so deeply committed to the ideals of the twenties, their ruin became his personal ruin; because he portrayed them honestly and unsentimentally, he left a valuable contribution to American literature.

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12 Stories, p. 402
Bibliography


--------. *The Great Gatsby.* New York, 1953


Key to symbols

A  The thesis sentence shows clearly the direction this paper will take. The careful formulation of a thesis statement helps a writer to keep the focus on a central idea and to avoid the temptation of introducing irrelevant material.

B  This sentence outline follows standard outline form and, like the thesis sentence, focuses on the development of a central idea.

C  Although the title of the paper has been given at the start of the outline, it should be repeated on the first page of the text.

D  Direct quotation. Since the author’s name is given in the text, it need not be repeated in the footnote. The title of the source, also mentioned in the text, might be similarly omitted, but its inclusion makes the notes immediately clear.

E  General information requiring no footnote.

F  Biographical information from a specific source, requiring a footnote. The covering statement at the end of footnote 2 eliminates the need for further footnoting of simple biographical data.

G  A direct quotation borrowed indirectly, as the footnote shows, from another source. In cases of indirect borrowing, both the primary and secondary sources must be given in the footnote.

H  Summary of a short story. Since the author and title are given in the text, both may be omitted from the footnote. Thus, footnote 4 begins with the name of the collection in which the story can be found.

I  Direct quotation from a different short story, with author and title given in the text. Although footnotes 4 and 5 refer to the same collection of short stories, the writer has used a shortened form of the title (Stories) instead of ibid. in footnote 5 because the note falls on a new page. This saves his reader the inconvenience of having to turn back to the earlier note.

J  This biographical information is covered by the comprehensive footnote to the DAB on page 1; no footnote is required here.
K Direct quotation from the same short story cited immediately above. Although *ibid.* is correctly used in footnote 6, a shortened form of the reference would be equally appropriate: *Stories, p. 143.*

L A long quotation set off by indentation and single spacing, with no quotation marks. Because the source was previously cited, a shortened reference is used in footnote 7. Both author and title are necessary since the writer has used two different sources by Mizener.

M Biographical information from a source other than the DAB and therefore requiring a footnote.

N A direct quotation from a novel. It is necessary to include the novel’s title in footnote 9 so that the source of the actual quotation will be absolutely clear; the author, however, is adequately identified in the context of the paper.

O Direct quotations from two different pages in the novel cited immediately above. The writer might have used a shortened reference instead of *ibid.: The Great Gatsby, pp. 180, 182.*

P Direct quotation and paraphrase of critical judgment. Although the author’s name is given in the text, it is repeated in the footnote to show that Trilling is author of the entire work as well as the particular essay cited.

Q Direct quotation from a short story, with author and title made clear in the text. *Stories* must be used here rather than *ibid.* because the footnote immediately preceding refers to a different work.

R Direct quotation from a newspaper article quoted in a book. The original source of the quotation is given in full, but a shortened form is used for the secondary source, which has been cited previously (footnote 3).

S Direct quotation from an essay in a book of collected essays. The author’s name, though given in the text, is repeated in the footnote to make it clear that he is author of the entire collection.

T Direct quotation, with the author’s name but not the title given in the text.
This bibliography follows the style recommended in the MLA Style Sheet, which does not include the publisher's name. If your instructor asks you to add this information, insert it between the place and date of publication, preceded by a colon and followed by a comma: Garden City, N.Y. : Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1956.

Source not cited in a footnote is used for background reading.

Several works by the same author, alphabetized by title. A line, followed by a period, is substituted for the author's name for all but the first work.

Exercise

Write a research report of at least two pages on any one of the following topics given below. Cite footnotes and list your sources of information in a bibliography at the end of the report. Remember not to make your subject so broad that you cannot handle it well in a short report.

1. An important stage in the career of a famous writer or poet
2. The origin of any popular sport such as takraw, baseball, football, tennis, basketball, bowling, boxing, etc.
3. Fashions in dress
4. Recent contributions of science
5. How your favorite TV show is produced.

All of this information is taken from