This chapter presents five practical tools for building a thesis:

- **The Terms, Expectations & Questions (TEQ) Sheet**, a critical record of what others have already said
- **The Purpose & Problem Statement**, a statement of your guiding questions
- **The Prospectus**, a first version of your own thesis
- **Flowchart**, a visual representation of the steps that lead to good writing
- **Checklist**, a review sheet for assessing your steps toward a thesis

These tools help you strengthen connections between existing knowledge and your own ideas.

**THINKING AND WRITING : THE MAP METAPHOR**

Maps are a special kind of writing. A map can tell about population, about geography, about natural resources, or about other features of a region. A map represents (re-presents) the world in a simplified set of terms. That is why there are so many maps of any region. It is also why maps change. They change because the region changes, and sometimes they change because somebody asks a new question about the region. Think: were there maps of oil reserves in 1800? There were no such maps because nobody needed, used, or understood petroleum. It did not matter, so it was not mapped. Oil matters a great deal in the modern world, and the maps of petroleum deposits are detailed.
Maps are not only the colorful squares and the globes that we traditionally imagine when we think of them. We “map out” a strategy, or we “map our future” when we plan a career. Thus, to “map” something means to understand it. Your maps are going to be drawn in words, in ideas, and in your general understanding of a topic. When you write, you will understand what has already been thought. Then, you will improve the “map” by adding, removing, and correcting information. Think about these three steps in creating a map of whatever subject you are writing about.

This chapter offers a step-by-step process that simplifies this three-step process. You can use its tools throughout the term as you develop the ideas that give your papers strong ideas supported by evidence.

**Mapping Existing Knowledge: TEQ Sheets for Useful Readings**

Writers must somehow navigate their craft to the world they want to explore. To do that, they have to know their predecessors’ routes and discoveries. Writers build their voyages on the maps created by others, and thus they must recognize basic tasks such as identifying trustworthy sources, developing strong reading skills, and sifting important information from the non-essential. The Terms, Expectations, and Questions (TEQ) Sheet is a tool for "surveying the field" of what has been thought about a subject. Not only does it help focus your attention on the details of the source, but it also helps locate the blank spaces in the "map" that others have made of the subject. These blanks will become the focus of your paper as you ask questions about them and develop your thesis. Using the TEQ Sheet below helps you map the world of what is known about your subject. **Remember: complete a TEQ Sheet for each reading that seems useful. Be selective.**

The blank TEQ sheets below are available as fillable forms [HERE].
Terms/Expectations/Questions: THE TEQ SHEET

Complete Citation:

__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

Terms and Phrases

To make its claim, the source uses important concepts. These concepts organize the evidence and make sense out of it. Identify four key concepts that are especially important to the source’s claim. Explain why each is important to the source’s claim.

1. ________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

2. ________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

3. ________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________

4. ________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________
Expectations

Readers already have beliefs about a topic even before they start reading. It is important to recognize the difference between what we expected and what we read. The difference between what we expect and what we read can identify unexplained territories that are worth writing about. List four ideas, facts, sources, or other features from the source that surprised you. How was each different from what you expected?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Surprising Elements</th>
<th>What You Expected to Read</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Questions

After carefully reviewing the source, ask three questions whose answers might become your claim. These questions should address the source’s assumptions, evidence, thesis, or issues that it ignores. Remember that yes/no questions don’t produce good papers, and that pro/con questions often produce immature and simplistic work.

1. ____________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
Naming the Gaps in the Map: The Purpose and Problem Statement

Explorers do not want to simply repeat the discoveries of others. They want to add to the existing map. The blanks in a map — named in the Problem statement — motivate the exploration, give it focus, and connect it to the discoveries of others. The gaps invite research, experimentation, and discovery. You too are an explorer, a writer who maps the field so you can find the blank spots where you can write your own discoveries.

The Purpose and Problem Statement (PPS) focuses the TEQ sheets. It asks you to connect these sheets to the specific assignment. It begins by asking you to review the purpose of the paper. The Purpose and Problem Statement is also the place where you directly ask about the gaps in the map. It gives you a place to name the problems in the existing map that you can fill with your own insight. Separate your PPS into two sections:

1. *The Purpose:* this statement quickly summarizes the assignment and identifies issues that might be important to a successful paper. The writer asks basic questions about the expectations for the task: its level of formality; required documentation; formats. Note that the writer is identifying key tasks that s/he will have to understand to produce a document that meets the expectations of its audience. Whether at school or work, you need to do the assignment. Reviewing the purpose of the task helps you do so.

2. *The Problem:* These are the specific questions the student has about the topic. The questions should identify an error in the existing discourse, an important aspect of the topic that hasn’t been discussed, evidence that would improve the understanding of the issue, or other opportunities to improve understanding of the topic. The Problem statement often expands on questions from the TEQ sheet. Note that the writer remains open to ideas. S/he is willing to leave some questions unanswered, but the Prospectus clearly points toward the thesis. These statements often are halfway between questions...
and answers. The questions contain terms, phrases, ideas, sources and tactics for dealing with the assignment. Use materials from the TEQ Sheets.

**Proposing the New Map: The Prospectus**

Explorers can discover a new island, a new lake, or even a continent. These discoveries force them to re-draw the map. The old map still matters because the explorers connect their discoveries to what is already known. Your writing will do the same thing. You will produce a new “map” (paper) that uses existing knowledge, but you will make discoveries that require a re-writing of the map to improve it. Good writing offers new ideas to specific audiences. The way writers re-draw the map will respect each audience’s level of interest and expertise. The redrawn map becomes the map that future writers study and improve.

The prospectus is the key step between the materials you write for yourself and what is written for your audience. It is the pivot between thinking about something and expressing your ideas so that others can share in your insight.

In many ways, the Prospectus is the abstract for the paper. Of course, the paper has not been written yet, so the prospectus is tentative. It almost certainly will change, but it gives an anchor for developing the thesis. Think of the prospectus as a larger form of an introduction. You might do well to start out by summarizing what others have said or what is the “standard” response to the question you face. Then, state the insight that provides a well-connected response.
Chapter 2: A Writer’s Toolkit

A FLOWCHART OF THE MAPPING PROCESS

The Map Metaphor

Mapping the Topic: TEQSheet for Each Reading
Identifying Gaps in the Map: Purpose & Problem Statement

Redrawing the Map: The Prospectus

ROUGH DRAFT

Rough Introduction: The Prospectus
Rough Paragraphs
Rough Conclusion

FULL DRAFT

Does document answer the assignment
Check organizational strategy
Check spelling, grammar, mechanics, formats
Review connection to task/assignment
Apply rubrics and other assessments

SUBMISSION DRAFT

FUNCTION #1: With transition or intro information to orient reader
FUNCTION #2: With evidence to support the thesis
FUNCTION #3: With explanation of why the evidence, facts, data matter
FUNCTION #4: Development, modification, growth, nuancing of the paper’s thesis

Explains steps in growth of the thesis. Answers the reader’s “So what?” Collects Function #4 sentences and examines logical sequence.
**A Checklist for Writing to Learn**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Writing to Learn</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surveying the field and building the map (TEQ Sheet)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the TEQ Sheet identify key terms that explain evidence or that provide explanations?</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do Expectations of the TEQ Sheet focus on content/argument of the reading? Are your expectations put in contrast to what you read?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Do the Questions serve as a stepping stone toward the Purpose &amp; Problem Statement (PPS)?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Do the TEQ Sheets imply a problematic issue rather than a yes/no question?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Discovering the Gaps (Purpose &amp; Problem Statement)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the PPS build on problematic issues recognized in the TEQ Sheets?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does the PPS ask questions that can use terminology, concepts, and insights developed in class discussion, readings, student examples, etc.?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the PPS reflect a disciplinary understanding of the topic?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proposing a Preliminary Thesis: the Prospectus</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Does the Prospectus briefly explain how the PPS will be answered?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Does the Prospectus offer a tentative thesis that can be supported with evidence?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Does the Prospectus offers a tentative thesis that can be developed into a substantial claim worthy of an entire paper?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Does the Prospectus name key evidence useful to the paper’s argument?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

Maps are a useful metaphor for thinking about how you can explore existing knowledge, discover uncharted ideas, and build ideas that make our understanding more complete. This means that you are more than a reporter. You take risks, offer explanations, and suggest future voyages. In the next chapter, you will learn to use some simple tools for these activities, and the result will be a kind of writing based in the strongest tool of all: your intelligence and your ability to share it with readers.