

ENGL 1301

Prewriting 3: Final Drafting Steps

Transition Strategy

Create transitions for each major section of your essay. Look at the sample and think about the way the closing sentences in each paragraph move us into the next part.

Transition from introduction into first body paragraph (your thesis):

While data brokers say they make our online experience better through personalized ads, the data broker industry needs serious federal regulation because these companies collect our personal information without really asking us, use that information in ways that can hurt our job and loan opportunities, and operate with way too much secrecy for a democratic society.

Transition between Body Paragraph 1 and Body Paragraph 2:

When companies collect information in ways we can't see and make profiles without clearly asking us, they're violating our basic privacy rights—and that's a problem that needs regulation to fix. But the issue goes beyond just privacy violations; this hidden data collection leads to real, measurable harm in people's everyday lives.

Transition between Body Paragraph 2 and Body Paragraph 3:

The real economic and social damage caused by unregulated data brokers makes this more than just a privacy issue—it's about basic fairness and equal opportunities. However, the threat extends even further than individual harm; data brokers also pose a serious danger to our democratic system itself.

Transition from Body Paragraph 3 into Counterargument:

Using data broker information to manipulate voters isn't just bad for individual privacy—it's a genuine threat to democracy, which makes regulation absolutely necessary. Of course, not everyone agrees that data brokers are this problematic.

Transition from Counterargument into Conclusion:

Instead of accepting a false choice between total surveillance or no personalization, we should demand a regulated system that respects both innovation and basic rights. The evidence clearly shows that the current approach is unsustainable.

Introduction and Conclusion Development

Introduction Strategy

How will you hook the reader?

I'll start by making it personal and relatable—describing everyday actions like unlocking your phone or using a loyalty card, then revealing that these actions are being tracked and sold. The metaphor of 'digital breadcrumbs' telling your story helps make the abstract concept of data collection feel concrete and kind of creepy.

What context is necessary to understand the controversy?

Readers need to understand that: (1) data brokers are companies most people have never heard of, (2) they collect info from tons of sources and combine it, (3) there's a real debate about whether this is a helpful business practice or a harmful violation of privacy, and (4) the central question is about consent—should companies be able to profit from our information without us really knowing or agreeing?

How will you build up to your thesis?

I'll start with the personal hook, then zoom out to explain what data brokers are and how they operate 'in the shadows.' Then I'll acknowledge that there are different perspectives on this (some think it helps businesses), but I'll emphasize the growing evidence of harm. This sets up the tension and leads naturally into my argumentative thesis that takes a clear stand for regulation.

Conclusion Strategy

How will you restate your thesis without simply repeating it?

Instead of repeating the exact thesis, I'll reframe it more simply: 'The way data brokers currently work—collecting information without real permission, enabling discrimination, and helping political manipulation—demands strong federal regulation to protect individual rights and democracy.' This hits the same points but in fresher language that emphasizes the problems and the solution.

What broader implications does your argument have?

I'll connect this to the bigger question of what kind of society we want to be—one where individuals control their own information, or one where corporations know everything about us and can use it however they want. I'll also mention how the push for laws like CCPA shows that attitudes are changing, and this is really about defining what privacy means in a digital world.

What call to action or final thought will you leave readers with?

I'll end with the 'data is the new oil' comparison but flip it—oil doesn't belong to anyone until it's extracted, but our data already belongs to us. Then I'll leave readers with the question: who gets to decide how that value is used, and will you have any say in it? This makes it personal again and leaves them thinking about their own stake in this issue.

Final Checklist for Drafting

Review these elements before writing your full draft:

Thesis Statement:

☒ Is it clearly argumentative?

Yes—it takes a clear position that the industry 'needs serious federal regulation.'

☒ Does it contain specific, debatable claims?

Yes—it gives three specific reasons (collection without consent, harm to opportunities, too much secrecy) that people could disagree with.

☒ Does it use precise, evaluative language?

Yes—words like 'serious federal regulation,' 'without really asking,' 'hurt our job and loan opportunities,' and 'way too much secrecy' make clear judgments.

Evidence and Support:

☒ Have you selected the strongest evidence from each source?

Yes—I used the FTC report on collection methods, Zuboff on surveillance capitalism, ProPublica on discrimination, and NYT on political manipulation. Each one directly supports my main points.

☒ Is your evidence relevant to your specific claims?

Yes—each piece of evidence matches the claim in that paragraph. For example, ProPublica's findings about job and loan denials directly support my claim about real-world harm.

☒ Do you have a balance of different types of evidence?

Yes—I have a government report (FTC), academic research (Zuboff), investigative journalism (ProPublica, NYT), and legal/policy information (CCPA, EFF). This gives me authority from different angles.

Organization and Structure:

☒ Does each paragraph have a clear purpose that advances your argument?

Yes—Paragraph 1 establishes the consent problem, Paragraph 2 shows concrete harm, Paragraph 3 reveals the democratic threat. Each builds on the previous one to make the case stronger.

☒ Have you created logical transitions between sections?

Yes—I worked on connecting sentences that close one idea and open the next. Each transition shows how the paragraphs relate (privacy violations → real harm → democratic threat → counterargument → conclusion).

☒ Does your counterargument paragraph strengthen rather than weaken your position?

Yes—I acknowledge that personalized services have benefits, but then I show why the costs are too high and that regulation doesn't mean eliminating personalization, just making the system fairer. This makes my position seem more reasonable.

APA Formatting:

☒ Is your title page correctly formatted?

Need to create a title page with: title, my name, institutional affiliation (the college), course number and name, instructor name (Professor Wood), and date—all centered and double-spaced.

☒ Are all in-text citations in proper APA style?

Need to check all citations use (Author, Year) or (Author, Year, p. #) format. For example: (Federal Trade Commission, 2014) and (Zuboff, 2019, p. 134). Need to make sure quotations have page numbers.

☒ Is your References page properly formatted?

Need to convert my Works Cited (MLA) to References (APA). This means: hanging indents, different capitalization (only first word and proper nouns), different date format (year in parentheses), and 'Retrieved from' for URLs.

☒ Have you used a standard 12-point font throughout?

Yes—using Times New Roman 12-point with double-spacing and 1-inch margins.

Academic Style:

☒ Have you maintained an academic tone?

Mostly yes, but I need to review for places where I might be too casual. I want it to be readable but still sound like college writing.

☒ Have you used precise, evaluative language but avoided over-writing?

I think so—I'm using words like 'threatens,' 'violates,' 'manipulation,' and 'discrimination' that make clear judgments, but I'm not using super complex vocabulary that makes it hard to read.

☒ Have you varied your sentence structure?

Need to check this—I should have a mix of short and long sentences, some that start with the subject and some that start with transitions or phrases.

☒ Have you eliminated unnecessary wordiness?

Need to review this—looking for phrases like 'due to the fact that' (just say 'because'), 'in order to' (just say 'to'), and other places where I'm using more words than I need.

Remember that strong argumentative writing:

- Takes a clear position.
- Supports claims with relevant evidence.
- Acknowledges and addresses opposing viewpoints.
- Uses precise, evaluative language.

- Creates a cohesive narrative, not just a list of points.
- Connects ideas logically with thoughtful transitions.
- Maintains an academic tone while being persuasive.

You've trained hard all semester, young ninja; now it's time to show off!