



The "Sandwich" as a Development Technique**

If you have had instructors who comment that your papers need more support or development, if you have trouble meeting the required length of an assignment, or if you find that you are merely padding your papers with strings of quotations, you may discover that the "sandwich" strategy is a solution to your problem. Even if your papers seem to satisfy the page requirement, but you are earning B's instead of A's on your papers, the problem may be that you have not critically thought about and used your supporting material. Because effective supporting material is often quoted from sources, you need to incorporate direct quotations effectively. It is not enough to introduce a quotation and then say, "so this proves that . . ." You need to explain how and why the quote serves to support your ideas. The "sandwich" technique may help you write better developed and more convincing papers.

Just as bread holds the contents of a sandwich together, a writer needs to introduce and then discuss the quotation to hold the quoted material together. It may help to visualize the "sandwich" as consisting of the following:

*The lead-in or introduction, the top slice of bread appeals to the reader and helps by providing enough of a context for the quoted material to make sense. Often you will want to include the title and author of the work and perhaps the author's credentials. In other words, use the "summary formula." The lead-in needs to be informative without duplicating the material in the quotation.

*The direction quotation, the meat of the "sandwich" comes next.

*The analysis or commentary, that essential bottom slice of bread provides a necessary line or two of clarification, interpretation, analysis, or discussion after the quotation. You may need to interpret or define the author's terms or discuss the significance of the quotation to the work as a whole. Most important, your analysis demonstrates the necessity of the quoted material for the point you are making.

In the following example from a student's work, notice how she leads in to her quote and then comments on it afterward without being redundant;

In The Obsession, Kim Chernin claims that today's ideal model excludes many women. She reports, "According to fashion, large size, maturity, voluptuousness, massiveness, strength, and power are not permitted if we wish to conform to our culture's ideal"¹¹ (94). Such conformity spells self-

destruction and is threatening to reduce women to mere skeletons.

The student prepares the reader to consider that fact that "many women" do not fit the "ideal" size. Her analytic comment after the quotation is good example of critical thinking. The student deduces the consequence of conforming and convinces the reader the of severity of the problem: "self-destruction."

**Adapted from Between Worlds, Bachman & Barth, p. 342-343. Provided by Karen Nikaji