Creating the Perfect Title

One of the most important components of a successful paper or essay is its title. A title should grab the reader’s attention and give him or her a clue about what the text is about. No one wants to read a paper title “Argument Essay #2.” A title can be created at any point in the writing process whenever inspiration strikes.

What needs to be in the title? - The type of title you should use depends on the assignment, but it should reflect the theme of the text and give readers a clue about what will be discussed.

- A scientific paper, such as one about the mating habits of jackrabbits, should have a matter-of-fact title.
  - “Mating Habits of Jackrabbits in North America”
- More creative assignments, such as a personal narrative for EN100, require more creative titles.
  - “Hop”
- Subtitles may be used to give readers added information.

Ways to Create a Title

Use a strong image - If there is an object that has significance in a paper, use that image as the title.

- *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Use a character’s name - This lets readers know that a certain character will be significant in the story.

- *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley
- *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald

Omit *The* - If a title needs to be spiced up a little, try omitting the word *the*.

- “The Flashlight” versus “Flashlight”

Find a Cool Phrase - If all else fails, reread the essay and find a short phrase that sounds interesting and is significant to the story. Chances are, a great title may already be written.