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# Visual Images as a Gateway to Scholarly Inquiry in Information Literacy Instruction

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## Visual Images as a Gateway to Scholarly Inquiry in Information Literacy Instruction

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# Visual Images as a Gateway to Scholarly Inquiry in Information Literacy Instruction

Susanne F. Paterson and Carolyn White Gamtso  
University of New Hampshire at Manchester  
ACRL-NEC/NELIG 2024

# Institutional Context



## University of New Hampshire at Manchester



# Our Professional Collaboration



- We collaborate to teach embedded, interactive IL workshops.
- First-Year Writing through English Capstone special topics courses.
- Incorporation of visual literacy into Literary Arts courses and IL sessions.
- Images as a lens into historical and social context of texts.
- Research and collaboration focused lately on intersection of visual literacy and Critical Information Literacy in the literature classroom.



1.

## *How to Read Anything* (ENGL 419)

# Course Context: *How to Read Anything* (ENGL 419): Student Learning Outcomes



- To introduce you to the techniques of close, analytical reading of literary texts.
- To provide you with an understanding of literary terms so that you can more fully appreciate the formal and artistic qualities of literature.
- To familiarize you with the characteristics of different genres of literature--poetry, short-story, novel, drama.
- To offer you a variety of literary texts which reflect the historical and cultural contexts in which they are written.
- To introduce you to library resources which will help you to engage in scholarly research.
- To help you polish your overall writing skills by giving you the opportunity to engage in the drafting and revision process as you write your papers.



## 2. Why Visual Literacy?

Wallpaper Pattern, Design by William Morris. Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust on Unsplash.



# Visual Literacy in the Literature Classroom (1)



- Though students are exposed to visual images more than text, they do not necessarily have the skills to decode them without their being purposefully and systematically taught (Anne Bamford).
- Although courses in English and allied disciplines privilege textual analysis, it cannot be assumed that the skills students deploy as a result transmit to visual texts (Richard Beach and Kerry Freedman).
- Teaching visual literacy and having students apply it to texts can be a mechanism by which their notion of a literate citizen is widened (Sean P. Connors).

## Visual Literacy in the Literature Classroom (2)



- Accessible to people with different literacies (visual learners; ESOL speakers).
- Bridge gap between printed text and visual text (interplay).
- Analyzing visual texts causes the reader to take “an agential role in making meaning” (David E. Low).
- Students become more active learners who “understand how images produce meaning, and become engaged in the search for this meaning” (Rocco Versaci).



### 3. Critical Information Literacy

Snakeshead, 1876-77. Designer: William Morris. Manufacturer: William Morris & Co. Photo by [Birmingham Museums Trust on Unsplash](#).

# Critical Information Literacy: Definitions



Critical information literacy is grounded in the theory and practice of *critical pedagogy*, an approach to teaching and learning “that positions education as a catalyst for social justice”  
(Tewell, 2015, p. 26).

# Critical Information Literacy: Decentralization of Classroom



Critical pedagogy calls for a “de-centralization of authority [so] that a level playing field is created where students are encouraged to express their own thoughts and come to their own conclusions”  
(Michelle Reale).



## 4. Information Literacy Sessions

Peacock and Dragon, Woven woollen fabric, 1878. Designer: William Morris. Designer: William Morris & Co. Photo by [Birmingham Museums Trust](#) on [Unsplash](#).

# ENGL 419 Information Literacy Sessions: Course Syllabus Context



- **Week 11: Rough Drafts of Novel Analysis due;** [conferences](#).
- **Week 12: Library Research Assignment guidelines;** library presentation; introduction to drama; discussion of Barnet, Chapter 12--Writing about Drama (187-215); introduction to Shakespeare's Theater and Renaissance Drama; William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* film adaptations; **Final Drafts of Novel Analysis due.**
- **Week 13:** Library presentation refresher; drama: William Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Acts 1 & 2); setting, characterization and motivation, symbol, atmosphere, structure; **Drama Analysis Assignment Sheet guidelines.**
- **Week 14:** Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (Acts 3, 4 & 5); structure of tragedy, conventions of genre, characterization; *Hamlet* (Act 5); plot development, characterization, images, setting, atmosphere, tragic form; **Library Research Assignment due.**
- **Week 15:** Tom Stoppard's *R and G are Dead*; Writing Workshop—walk-through of drama analysis; checklist for writing about drama, Chapter 12 (214-15); review of Chapter 12--Writing about Drama (187-215), especially Comedy and Tragicomedy; wordplay and irony, tone, characterization, theme; comic form; **topic proposals for Drama Analysis due.**

# ENGL 419 Information Literacy Sessions: IL Assignment (excerpt)



- Considering the conversations we have had in class about different portrayals of Hamlet over time and in different media, you will now continue that inquiry by searching for a scholarly, peer reviewed article which explores different portrayals of Hamlet's cruelty. You'll use the **UNH Library Search Box** to search for your scholarly article.
- In the Search Box, enter the following: Hamlet AND cruelty
- When you have your list of articles, click on Peer Reviewed Journals, in the grey column on the left side. (This will limit your results to peer reviewed articles.) THEN
- Find a **full-text** article that addresses how Hamlet has been portrayed as being cruel and **print the first page** of this article
- Using the criteria discussed in class and the accompanying handout, **write a summary** of 3-4 sentences or so, describing the content of the article. **Then** write another paragraph (2-3 sentences or so) **evaluating** the article using the PROVEN framework as a guide; finally, write another 2 or 3 sentences **reflecting** on the usefulness of the article in helping you to understand different portrayals of Hamlet's behavior.



# ENGL 419 Information Literacy Sessions



- Develop researchable questions.
- Encourage student agency.
- Use primary sources and visual literacy to inspire group inquiry.
- Demonstrate how interpretations of texts vary over time and across social contexts.



## 5. Question Formulation Technique

Jasmine. Green version. Design by William Morris. Photo by [Birmingham Museums Trust](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# Question Formulation Technique (QFT)



- Right Question Institute: <https://rightquestion.org/>
- Question Formulation Technique (QFT):  
<https://rightquestion.org/what-is-the-qft/>

# Question Formulation Technique (QFT)



Developed by Daniel Rothstein and Luz Santana of RQI, the QFT teaches students “how to generate their own questions, improve and work with their questions, and strategize on how to use their questions as a part of a structured active learning experience”

(Minigan, Westbrook, Rothstein, Santana, 2017, p. 270).

# Question Formulation Technique (QFT) Visual Literacy Workshop



Right Question  
Institute

[rightquestion.org](https://rightquestion.org)

Adapted from Right Question Institute (n.d.). *QFT PowerPoint Template*, <https://rightquestion.org/resources/facilitating-the-qft-template/>

# The Question Formulation Technique (QFT)

## We will learn to:

- **Produce** our own questions
- **Improve** our questions
- **Strategize** how to use our questions
- **Reflect** on what we have learned and how we learned it

# Guidelines for Producing Questions

---

- 1. Ask as many questions as you can**
- 2. Do not stop to answer, judge, or discuss**
- 3. Write down every question exactly as stated**
- 4. Change any statements into questions**



# Question Focus: Worksheets



# Categorizing Questions: Closed/ Open

## Definitions:

- **Closed-ended** questions can be answered with “yes” or “no,” or with a **one-word** answer.
- **Open-ended** questions require more **explanation**.

Directions: Identify your questions as closed-ended or open-ended by **marking them** with a “**C**” or an “**O**.”

# Discussion

---

Closed-ended Questions	
Advantages	

# Discussion

---

Open-ended Questions	
Advantages	

# Strategize: Prioritizing Questions

## **Review your list of questions**

- Choose the three questions you would like to explore more.
- While prioritizing, think about your Question Focus

## **After prioritizing consider...**

- Why did you choose those three questions?
- Where are your priority questions in the sequence of your entire list of questions?

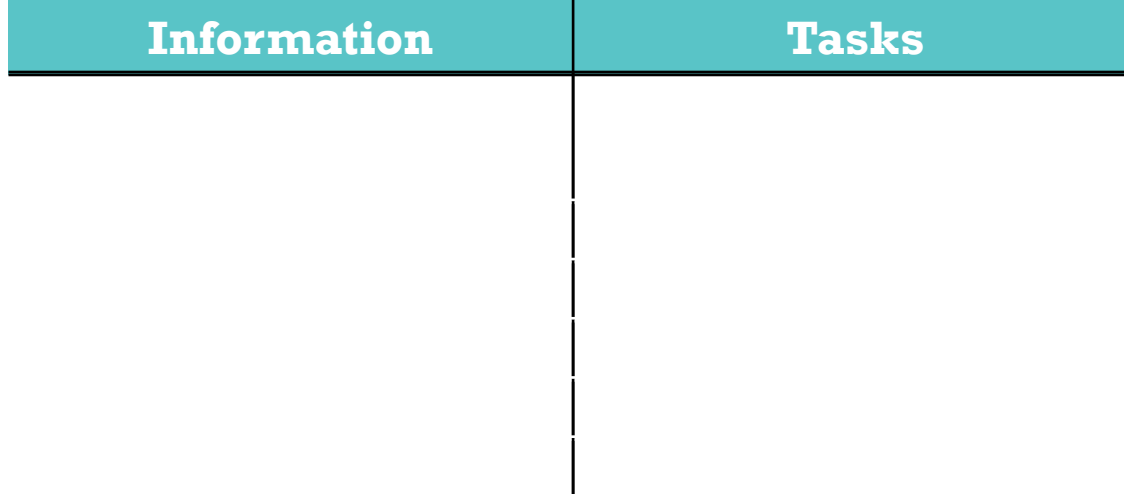
# Strategize: Action Plan

---

From priority questions to action plan...

To answer your priority questions:

- What do you need to *know*? **Information**
- What do you need to *do*? **Tasks**



# Groups Share with the Class

Your three priority questions and their numbers in your original sequence

Your rationale for choosing your priority questions

Your action plan. What do you need to know and what do you need to do now?



## Question Focus Images

Shakespeare, W. (1922). *Shakespeare's Hamlet, prince of Denmark*. Selwyn & Blount. Illustrated by John Austen.

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# 6. Research Action Plan

'Eyebright', green and yellow design sample, 1882-83. Designer: William Morris. Photo by [Birmingham Museums Trust](#) on [Unsplash](#).



# Research Action Plan: Federated Library Search



The screenshot shows the University of New Hampshire at Manchester library search interface. The search query is "hamlet AND insanity". The results page displays two articles:

- Article 1:** "Stark Raving Sane": A Deconstructionist Reading of Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*. Anafora (Osijek, Croatia), 2021-01. Peer reviewed, Open Access. Includes links for Download PDF and View Issue Contents.
- Article 2:** *Hamlet's Catch-22: A Psychoanalytic Reading of Hamlet and Catch-22*. Azad, Bahareh; Abbasi, Pyeagam. Critical survey (Oxford, England), 2018-09, Vol.30 (3), p.97-115. Includes a quote: "The double-bind dilemma that Hamlet is engulfed in places him in a catch-22 situation from which there seems to be no..."

The interface includes filters for "Years: 1990-2022" and "Peer-reviewed Journals". A "Refine Your Results" section has an option to "Include items you will need to request". A "Sort by Relevance" dropdown is visible. An orange chat bubble in the bottom right corner says "Chat offline Email us".

'Eyebright', green and yellow design sample, 1882-83. Designer: William Morris. Photo by [Birmingham Museums Trust](#) on [Unsplash](#)

# Research Action Plan: Article Assignment



The screenshot shows a library article page with a blue sidebar on the left containing navigation icons (up, down, search, left, right). The main content area includes:

- ARTICLE** header
- Austen's Dark Prince: Demonic and Deranged** title
- Author: Moore, Luisa
- Source: Shakespeare studies (Columbia), 2021-01, Vol.49, p.207-11
- Abstract: *Introduction UPON ITS INITIAL RELEASE in 1922, John Austen's illustrated Hamlet, published by Selwyn and Blount, was well-received...*
- PEER REVIEWED badge
- Check holdings Dimond Library Dimond - Level 4 (PR2885 .S64) >
- Available Online >
- Send to section with icons for: DIRECT EXPORT TO RIS, EXPORT BIBTEX, EASYBIB, ENDNOTE, CITATION, DIRECT LINK, EMAIL, and PRINT.
- View Online link
- Full text availability link

On the right side, there is a 'Related reading' section with a list of items:

- Shakespeare's Hamlet
- Bill Delaney
- The Explicator.2005, Vol. 65(2), p. 66-205

Below this is an 'ARTICLE suggested by' section with a list:

- Local Communities
- Jessica Apolloni
- Studies in

An orange chat bubble in the bottom right corner contains the text 'Chat offline' and 'Email us' with an envelope icon.

# Reflection Questions

---

- What did you learn during the QFT workshop?
- How can you use the process to advance your own learning?

# Second Information Literacy Session



- Reviewed the QFT activity and the research action plan.
- Discussed source evaluation using the PROVEN method.
- Considered annotation model from the OWL at Purdue.
- Collectively wrote annotation of the Luisa Moore article.
- Introduced homework assignment, which asked students to use the Library Search Box to locate, evaluate, and annotate an article on topic of Hamlet's cruelty.



# 7. Student Reflections

Acanthus, 1879-1881. Wallpaper design by William Morris. Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust on [Unsplash](#).

# What did you learn during the QFT exercise?



- “I learned how to prioritize certain questions and ask meaningful and interesting ones.”
- “The exercise helped me practice generating good research questions by focusing on important details, both visual and subjective. I learned some of the techniques on how to formulate a strong research question and applied that toward the list I came up with. This allowed me to narrow down my list to the very best research questions I came up with.”

## What did you learn during the QFT exercise?



- “I learned an interesting and efficient method for developing various types of questions relating to a topic. I also learned how to categorize these questions and focus on specific questions based on their parameters so that I could reach a specific destination with the possible resulting answer. I also learned how to turn several of my observations into questions.”

# How can you use the process to advance your own learning?



- “I can formulate more complex research questions and can thus construct a better paper.”
- “You can use this knowledge to think of what you are looking to get out of a piece of media or literature and create better open ended questions around that, rather than closed ended questions that may not give sufficient details.”



# How can you use the process to advance your own learning?



- “I can use this process to help create a list of questions for various future projects and then go through and narrow down that list to the most important questions. This should help guide my research into a more meaningful direction.”
- “I can use this process to create many different and unique questions that can increase my understanding of the subject matter from the detailed side to the generalized side. It also allows me to turn my observations into questions which prevents me from getting stuck during research or analysis of subjects.”



# 8. Discussion/Q & A

Thank you! Please feel welcome to reach out to us.



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Carolyn White Gamtso

Carolyn.Gamtso@unh.edu

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# Attributions



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# References (1)

A decorative horizontal border featuring a repeating pattern of stylized flowers and leaves in blue, yellow, and white on a light background.

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QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE  
SMALL GROUP WORKSHEET



Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher/Instructor: \_\_\_\_\_

Class/Course: \_\_\_\_\_

Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Guidelines for Producing Questions:**

- Ask as many questions as you can
- Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer any questions
- Write down every question exactly as it is stated
- Change any statement into a question





**Your Questions:**

**Priority Questions:**

**1.**

**2.**

**3.**

## Rationale:

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## Action Plan:

### From priority questions to action plan...

To answer your priority questions:

- What do you need to *know*? **Information**
- What do you need to *do*? **Tasks**

Information	Tasks

### Groups Share with the Class:

Your three priority questions and their numbers in your original sequence

Your rationale for choosing your priority questions

Your action plan. What do you need to know and what do you need to do now?

### Reference

Austen, John. "Hamlet [a set of 121 original drawings]." *Artstor*, 1922, <https://library.artstor.org/asset/25239379>.

Adapted from Right Question Institute (n.d.). *Question Formulation Technique Worksheet*. <https://rightquestion.org/resources/question-formulation-technique-outline/>

QUESTION FORMULATION TECHNIQUE  
SMALL GROUP WORKSHEET



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## Rationale:

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Purdue OWL > General Writing > Common Writing Assignments >  
Annotated Bibliographies > **Annotated Bibliographies**

# Annotated Bibliographies



## Welcome to the Purdue OWL

[https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/common\\_writing\\_assignments/annotated\\_bibliographies/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.html)

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### DEFINITIONS

A **bibliography** is a list of sources (books, journals, Web sites, periodicals, etc.) one has used for researching a topic. Bibliographies are sometimes called "References" or "Works Cited" depending on the style format you are using. A



bibliography usually just includes the bibliographic information (i.e., the author, title, publisher, etc.).

An **annotation** is a summary and/or evaluation. Therefore, an **annotated bibliography** includes a summary and/or evaluation of each of the sources.

Depending on your project or the assignment, your annotations may do one or more of the following.

- **Summarize:** Some annotations merely summarize the source. What are the main arguments? What is the point of this book or article? What topics are covered? If someone asked what this article/book is about, what would you say? The length of your annotations will determine how detailed your summary is.  
For more help, see our handout on **paraphrasing** sources.
- **Assess:** After summarizing a source, it may be helpful to evaluate it. Is it a useful source? How does it compare with other sources in your bibliography? Is the information reliable? Is this source biased or objective? What is the goal of this source?  
For more help, see our handouts on **evaluating resources**.
- **Reflect:** Once you've summarized and assessed a source, you need to ask how it fits into your research. Was this source helpful to you? How does it help you shape your argument? How can you use this source in your research project? Has it changed how you think about your topic?

Your annotated bibliography may include some of these, all of these, or even others. If you're doing this for a class, you should get specific guidelines from your instructor.

## WHY SHOULD I WRITE AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY?

**To learn about your topic:** Writing an annotated bibliography is excellent preparation for a research project. Just collecting sources for a bibliography is

useful, but when you have to write annotations for each source, you're forced to read each source more carefully. You begin to read more critically instead of just collecting information. At the professional level, annotated bibliographies allow you to see what has been done in the literature and where your own research or scholarship can fit. To help you formulate a thesis: Every good research paper is an argument. The purpose of research is to state and support a thesis. So, a very important part of research is developing a thesis that is debatable, interesting, and current. Writing an annotated bibliography can help you gain a good perspective on what is being said about your topic. By reading and responding to a variety of sources on a topic, you'll start to see what the issues are, what people are arguing about, and you'll then be able to develop your own point of view.

**To help other researchers:** Extensive and scholarly annotated bibliographies are sometimes published. They provide a comprehensive overview of everything important that has been and is being said about that topic. You may not ever get your annotated bibliography published, but as a researcher, you might want to look for one that has been published about your topic.

## FORMAT

The format of an annotated bibliography can vary, so if you're doing one for a class, it's important to ask for specific guidelines.

**The bibliographic information:** Generally, though, the bibliographic information of the source (the title, author, publisher, date, etc.) is written in either MLA or APA format. For more help with formatting, see our [MLA handout](#). For APA, go here: [APA handout](#).

**The annotations:** The annotations for each source are written in paragraph form. The lengths of the annotations can vary significantly from a couple of sentences to a couple of pages. The length will depend on the purpose. If you're just writing summaries of your sources, the annotations may not be very long. However, if you are writing an extensive analysis of each source, you'll need more space.

You can focus your annotations for your own needs. A few sentences of general summary followed by several sentences of how you can fit the work into your larger paper or project can serve you well when you go to draft.

I found this source for my paper. Do you think I should use it?

Have you  
**P.R.O.V.E.N.**  
that this source is a  
good choice?



The process of evaluating a source includes examining the source itself **and** examining other sources by:

- Checking for previous work.** Has someone already fact-checked this source?
- Finding the original source.** Who originally published the information and why?
- Reading laterally.** What do other people say about this publication and author?
- Circling back.** How can you revise your original search to yield better results?
- Checking your own emotions.** Is your own bias affecting your evaluation?\*

The following questions will help you think critically during the source evaluation process:

### **Purpose: How and why the source was created.**

- Why does this information exist—to educate, inform, persuade, sell, entertain? Do the authors, publishers, or sponsors state this purpose, or try to disguise it?
- Why was this information published in this particular type of source (book, article, website, blog, etc.)?
- Who is the intended audience—the general public, students, experts?

### **Relevance: The value of the source for your needs.**

- Is the type of source appropriate for how you plan to use it and for your assignment's requirements?
- How useful is the information in this source, compared to other sources? Does it answer your question or support your argument? Does it add something new and important to your knowledge of the topic?
- How detailed is the information? Is it too general or too specific? Is it too basic or too advanced?

### **Objectivity: The reasonableness and completeness of the information.**

- Do the authors present the information thoroughly and professionally? Do they use strong, emotional, manipulative, or offensive language?
- Do the authors, publishers, or sponsors have a particular political, ideological, cultural, or religious point of view? Do they acknowledge this point of view, or try to disguise it?
- Does the source present fact or opinion? Is it biased? Does it offer multiple points of view and critique other perspectives respectfully? Does it leave out, or make fun of, important facts or perspectives?

### **Verifiability: The accuracy and truthfulness of the information.**

- Do the authors support their information with factual evidence? Do they cite or link to other sources? Can you verify the credibility of those sources? Can you find the original source of the information?
- What do experts say about the topic? Can you verify the information in other credible sources?
- Does the source contradict itself, include false statements, or misrepresent other sources?
- Are there errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar?

### **Expertise: The authority of the authors and the source.**

- What makes the authors, publishers, or sponsors of the source authorities on the topic? Do they have related education, or personal or professional experience? Are they affiliated with an educational institution or respected organization? Is their expertise acknowledged by other authorities on the topic? Do they provide an important alternative perspective? Do other sources cite this source?
- Has the source been reviewed by an editor or through peer review?
- Does the source provide contact information for the authors, publishers, and/or sponsors?

### **Newness: The age of the information.**

- Is your topic in an area that requires current information (such as science, technology, or current events), or could information found in older sources still be useful and valid?
- When was the information in the source first published or posted? Are the references/links up to date?
- Are newer sources available that would add important information to your understanding of the topic?

\* Based on Caulfield, Mike. "Four Moves and a Habit." *Web Literacy For Student Fact-Checkers*, 2017. [webliteracy.pressbooks.com](http://webliteracy.pressbooks.com)

