

## Example Exploratory Synthesis Paper #1

Writing on a whole has been characterized and taught with strict rules on how it should look like. It must be original, it must use an active voice, it must, it must, it must. The list goes on, with each rule becoming harsher and more inflexible than the next. And it is because of these rigid limitations set by society and the education system that we not only limit our perception on what writing is, but limit our perception on what writing could be.

While some of the rules of writing have been implemented over time, the very foundation of what is considered good writing was set by those in power, causing others who do not fit that category to be looked down upon. Edward and Paz (2017) note how the founding writers—often known as The Greats—have been idealized and have set a lasting image on how writers should be like. It is within this image left where the concept of originality is glorified, to the point where writers today are set up for failure when they are not able to live up to the notion that all their ideas must come from themselves and are not influenced by external sources. This feeling of inadequacy is also found at the heart of the English language barrier and academic English. Writer Pattanayak (2017) notices how our belief of what “correct English” is has roots in white upper-middle class culture, dating back to the founding fathers, leading to people with different dialects or from different backgrounds being demeaned and forcing them to lose parts of their identity to obey these limitations. In both of these findings, it is clear that those that set the rules have continued to dominate over both education and society, retaining their power over the conventional idea of what writing should look like.

Writing that is willing to break the mold, however, is often not seen as valuable as the more hegemonic style. In Wardle’s (2017) piece, she writes how unorthodox writing forms like fanfiction or social media are not seen as real writing in the eyes of the general public. For fanfiction, the goal is to write previously created characters into a story that

diverges from the original source material. While it allows writers to explore alternate narratives, because the characters themselves are not new, writers of this craft are not seen as writers, but an imitation of one, tying back to Edward and Paz's idea on how the concept of originality has caused society to devalue writing that reuses narratives. Social media, such as Twitter, have brought upon new writing methods due to its character limitations and format. Since these methods deviate from the more conventional ones, it often gets categorized as using "incorrect" English and, like fanfiction, not seen as real writing. Essentially, even as times have changed and brought new methods of writing, our perception of what is considered writing has stayed stagnant, and continues to limit writing's potential.

With that being said, why are these rigid rules so harmful to the entirety of writing? And it is because it forces only one style of writing, of creativity to be seen as correct, that it dismisses the potential that nonconforming writing brings. Pattanayak writes how academics who use different writing styles have their papers unacknowledged, leaving many ideas and theories untapped. Wardle mentions how fanfiction is deemed lesser than conventional writing, ignoring the creative potential that lies within that writing genre. Edward and Paz present how writing collaboration is discouraged, depriving writers from expanding their skills. In short, all the writers assert how by restricting writing, we lose what writing could be: expansive, creative, and collaborative.

[definitely going to revise the entirety of the second and last paragraph, along with adding what changes should be made to make writing be more expansive and have more freedom]