

# Writing Strong Titles

ENG 1101 / Iddings

(adapted from Yale College Writing Center:  
[www.yale.edu/writing](http://www.yale.edu/writing))

# What Does a Title Do?

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others can find the essay

# Conventions in Titles

Often, titles in college essays use a title and a subtitle

For example:

Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the  
Fracturing of a Nation

Going Wendigo: The Emergence of the Iconic  
Monster in Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* and  
Antonia Bird's *Ravenous*

# Title: Subtitle

- The title is often more creative, especially in the humanities or social sciences
- The subtitle provides details about the exact content

# Titles in science essays

- use as few words as possible

For example:

NO: Factors controlling sex determination in turtles

YES: Roles of nest site selection and temperature in determining sex ratio in loggerhead sea turtles

NO: The control of organ development in fish

YES: The novel gene “exdpf” regulates pancreas development in zebrafish

(from: Jan Pechenik's *A Short Guide to Writing About Biology*)

# Brainstorming Titles

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- taste, smell, or feel—to use as a title.
- Try a title beginning with an -ing verb (like “Creating a Good Title”).
- Try a one-word title—the most obvious one possible.
- Try a familiar saying, or the title of a book, song, or movie, that might fit your essay. Can you twist it by changing a word or creating a pun?
- Look up peer-reviewed articles and model your title on theirs.
- Combine two parts you’ve brainstormed to create a title and subtitle.