Writing Strong Titles

To write stronger titles, keep these guidelines in mind:

Why do we need titles? Titles engage our readers by…

- Informing what our work will be about
- Clarifying the relevance of our work for others' research
- Compelling their curiosity and interest in our work

How do we format our essay titles? Formal titles follow…

- Title case formatting; this type of formatting means **capitalizing the first word**, the **last word**, and **every significant word in between.** For example:
  - **Transgressive _Tekken_: Player Expression and Participatory Culture in the Korean Backdash**

In this example, the words "and," "in," and "the" are not capitalized because they are not significant words. Significant words constitute key, specific words and usually exclude articles, prepositions, and conjunctions.

What approaches can I take to creating titles?

For a compelling, thoughtful title, you might try…

- **Two-part title:**
  - Creative introductory clause: Descriptive, Specific Topic
  - Example: "RENT's Tango With Your Emotions: An Analysis of Modernism in Larson's Melodramatic Musical"
  - The two-part title is nice because it offers readers the best of both worlds: a creative, catchy opening that stokes their curiosity and an informative, precise closing that helps them understand what your work will be about. It's a win-win!

You can also just write "one-part" titles that prioritize either….

- **Creative, narrative title:**
  - Example: "_RENT_'s Tango With Your Emotions"
- **Descriptive/informative title:**
  - Example: "An Analysis of Modernism in Larson's Melodramatic Musical"
- Depending on your genre/discipline, one structure may be more effective or appropriate than the other. For example, STEM papers or reports should have the descriptive/informative title. Creative projects, like short stories, should have creative titles. Scholarly work in the Humanities or Arts or Social Science may have the two-part title.