Key Terms and Consistent Language

- **Key terms** are words or phrases that communicate the main ideas of a piece of writing. They make papers and paragraphs cohesive and emphasize important points to the reader.
- In an academic paper, the thesis statement contains the main key terms.

Identifying Key Terms

- Good writers **identify** the paper's key terms when writing the thesis statement.
- They then **use the key terms to organize** the sections of their paper according to each point in the thesis. This signals to readers which point of the thesis they are supporting in each section.
- Writers often reuse and develop these terms in **topic sentences**, **transition sentences**, and **conclusion sentences** of their paragraphs. Sometimes, writers may have to introduce minor key terms in individual paragraphs or passages.

Thesis: *Data indicates that **consumers prefer waffles** to **pancakes** because of their **flavor**, **texture**, and **cook time**.*

- *The major key terms (carried from the thesis statement above) are highlighted in yellow, while minor key terms are highlighted in blue:*

Consumer preference for waffles originates in the belief that waffles' flavor avoids the mealy tang of some pancake batters, resulting in a more sophisticated eating experience. Daniel Doherty, executive chef at London's famous Duck & Waffle eatery, says that waffle flavor strikes the perfect balance between dinner roll and vanilla cake (29). This balance between savory and sweet undoubtedly encourages consumers to feel their meal is also an appropriate balance between substantiality and indulgence. In addition, waffle flavor avoids the tang associated with pancakes that have been cooked

Key Terms & Consistent Language

- If one or more sources play a prominent part in the paper, **the writer may adopt some of the source's key terms.**
- **Responsible writers always use quotation marks and citations** for key terms from outside sources! Writers should treat outside key terms like direct quotes.
- Clear writers **keep the point of view consistent** throughout the paper. Third person is typically preferred in academic settings.
- Clear writers also **keep verb tense consistent** when talking about the same topic or source.
  - Consult the appropriate style manual for tense guidelines that correspond to the type of assignment.

For more information on retaining academic formality in assignments, refer to the resources on "Scholarly Tone" and "Professional Tone" in writing.