According to our textbook, “A mechanism is a synthetic object consisting of a number of identifiable parts that work together” (187). Describe a mechanism of your choice.

**What’s an appropriate topic?**

The mechanism should not be too simple and should not be overly complicated.

Too complicated:

* A television
* The Starship Enterprise

Too simple:

* A ruler
* A paper clip

Off-limits because we are discussing it in class:

* A binder clip
* A potato peeler
* An adjustable wrench (unless yours differs significantly from the one in the sample description)
* A pepper mill (unless yours differs significantly from the one in the sample description)

**What’s in a mechanism description?**

Your description should include the following things:

* Introduction with a definition, graphics, and a list of parts
* Description of each part and how it is connected to other parts
* A mini user guide
* Conclusion

**How do I format it?**

You may format it however you feel it’s most organized and most easy-to-read. Typically, students double-space mechanism descriptions; however, depending on your format, you may choose to space it differently. The 4+ page guideline is for double-spaced papers. Depending on your topic, your paper may be significantly longer than 4 pages.

**How do I get started?**

Here are some questions for brainstorming. As you think about these questions, look at your mechanism as if you’ve never seen it before and you have no background knowledge or assumptions about it.

* What’s its primary purpose?
* What are its secondary purposes? (What else could it be used for?)
* What size is it? If there are a range of sizes it comes in, what is that range?
* How is it different from other tools like it?
* What are the parts?
* What is each part made of? Why?
* What is the purpose of each part?
* How are the parts connected?
* How do these connections help the parts function together?
* How would you explain how to use it to someone from another planet?