

Writing in Western Civilization: A Manual for Instructors

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Introduction to Writing in Western Civilization

The Western Civilization Program at the University of Kansas offers students the opportunity to integrate their educational pursuits into the broader context of the ideas and values of Western culture. Writing is key to this integration because it supports both communication and learning. These dual capabilities make writing a useful teaching tool for courses such as Western Civilization where students need to work to comprehend a great deal of new material and to communicate specific aspects of their understanding. Specifically, writing helps to integrate theoretical concepts by encouraging creativity, analysis, and synthesis—qualities that Western Civilization instructors are likely to promote.

Besides providing advantages for students, incorporating writing throughout this program benefits the instructors and the program itself. Writing not only indicates to instructors what students know, but it also reveals how effectively they are engaging in higher order thinking, and what gaps in reasoning need to be addressed. Program-wide, writing can organize a course, giving structure while extending options to students as they work. In addition, systematic instruction in writing promotes internal consistency within the program and provides documentation of student learning.

Writing as a Communication Tool

In the course of studying Western Civilization, your students will use writing to communicate to you that they have read the material, what they understand about what they have read, how one writer or theoretical position compares or contrasts with others, how one idea should be associated with another or why it should not, and how a theoretical position enlightens or informs practice.

The formal papers that students produce are more likely to be successful if assignments are sequenced hierarchically and if writing receives input as it progresses. If writing assignments are graduated in difficulty, instructors will lay crucial critical-thinking groundwork for their students that will allow them to move successfully beyond mere comprehension to analysis and synthesis. And, if students write over the course of a semester, problems in reasoning or with the assignment can be caught and corrected.

Writing as a Learning Tool

By using writing-to-learn strategies in your courses, you can help your students realize the idea-generating potential of writing. Students will have practice in the sort of single-draft writing expected of them in exam situations; they can clarify, store and process

information for future use. Writing can be incorporated throughout the semester in a number of ways, depending on what sorts of learning experiences instructors desire for their students:

- Instructors who like to work with a variety of topics may assign three or four BRIEF (2-3 page) PAPERS. If these are carefully graduated in difficulty, they can constitute an effective writing component. Informal SHORT WRITINGS might constitute the preparatory writing for these.
- Instructors who favor research papers—especially in HWC 205-- might segment the paper so that students submit a PROSPECTUS and/or an ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY prior to writing the paper. If these are reviewed by peers or the instructor early in the project, any misdirection can be caught.
- Instructors who use writing to anchor the entire semesters can select a term project. Some examples:
 - A PROJECT BOOK devoted to a specific topic or issue as approached by various thinkers and/or as manifested in contemporary events.
 - A semester-long PORTFOLIO of students' essays, microthemes, exams.
 - A READING or RESPONSE JOURNAL addressing issues raised in class or their application to broader topics. This option can coordinate with on-line discussions and Blackboard activities.

Part One: Designing Assignments

The Western Civilization Writing Project is ongoing training for instructors to support teaching Western Civ. at KU. Realizing that instructors come from a variety of academic backgrounds, we have attempted to devise a program that gives guidance with flexibility for individual teaching methods. Just as we scaffold the training, we will ask you to do likewise with your teaching. As the semester begins, we provide structure and considerable teaching support. As the semester and classroom experience progresses, writing guidance will be less directed and the instructor's autonomy will increase. By the time Western Civilization II begins, instructors will be on their own, but encouraged to continue consultations with supervisors. The following questions may serve as guidelines for writing activities throughout both semesters of the course.

Questions to Consider as You Design Writing Assignments

Adapted from: Richard L. Larson's list in *Writing in the Academic and Professional Disciplines: A Manual for Faculty*. Herbert H. Lehman College (CUNY), 1983.

1. Why is the student being asked to write the paper? What judgment is required? What cognitive / conceptual activities are necessary? Will the student acquire new knowledge?
2. Is the task clearly defined? Does the instructor know the parameters of desirable responses? Do students know? Is the basis for evaluation clear to the students?

3. What do you want the assignment to yield? Do you want the students to (a) re-state information (b) describe a concept (c) explain an idea (d) analyze an argument (e) evaluate an argument (f) critique a viewpoint (g) compare various theories (h) argue one side or another?

4. What words best convey what you want the students to do: describe, summarize, argue, compare, analyze, explain, evaluate, critique?

5. Is the assignment part of a larger plan for the semester's work? If so, how does this exercise fit that plan?

Western Civilization I –Sample Assignments

Assignments for Western Civilization I should be developed hierarchically in terms of the previous knowledge and skill students will need to complete assignments. The following sample outlines have proved successful, and may be adopted as provided here, or used as models for further development. Note: every assignment should be accompanied by written instructions that specify the goals and requirements of the paper.

Assignment #1

Purpose: To take a significant idea or course theme and clarify that idea in the context of one reading.

Question: Analyze the significance of the concept of _____ as it appears in the reading from _____.

Example: Analyze the significance of the concept of covenant as it appears in the story of Abraham and Isaac from the *Book of Genesis* in *The Hebrew Bible*.

Assignment #2

Purpose: To compare and contrast a central question or theme of the course as it appears in two texts.

Question: How does the idea of _____ in reading from _____ compare and /or contrast with the same idea in _____?

Example: How does the idea of “the good life” as presented in Aristotle’s *Politics* compare and / or contrast with “the good life” in Seneca’s *Letters from a Stoic*?

Note: Discuss the structure of this format with students. Point by point comparisons (AB/AB/AB) differ significantly in form, content and conclusion from the more general AAA/BBB structure. Advise students which format you expect.

Assignment #3

Purpose: To argue a position using two or more Western Civilization texts as support.

Question: Using the words and ideas of _____ and _____ as support, explain your position on the following question: _____

Example: Using Creon's speeches in *Antigone* and Machiavelli's advice in *The Prince*, explain how much allegiance you think a leader owes the public.

Preparatory Strategies:

- Suggest that students consult the *HWC Student Writing Guide* on constructing the basic essay.
- Require a précis, paraphrase, problem statement or notes to aid comprehension of a reading.
- Have students submit a thesis statement well in advance of the paper's due date to identify problems with topics and approaches.
- Cover expectations for citation and documentation of sources—including primary text material.
- Review the basic essay outline with students. Note your expectations for introduction, body, conclusion, style and presentation of the paper. (You may want to provide a tip sheet or checklist on this information early in the semester. See appendix for examples.)

Western Civilization II--Overview

The level and amount of writing stipulated for Western Civilization I is also expected for Western Civilization II. This writing may be incorporated into your course in a number of ways. No formal program-wide plan has been designed. Rather, you should call upon your experience and knowledge from teaching Western Civilization I to design and implement your own writing program in consultation with your supervisors and faculty lecturers. Samples of successful Western Civilization II assignments are included here and may be adopted in their present form or tailored to your class.

Western Civilization II Sample Assignment:

Writing Themes

From the themes listed below, you will use three to complete three out-of-class essays. Your complete essays must be free of spelling and grammatical errors, as well as hand-written corrections. All ideas other than your own—including direct quotations, references to the texts, and paraphrases-- must be properly cited in MLA, Chicago, Turabian, or other recognized style formats.

The first essay is worth 10% of your total grade, the second 10%, and the third 15%. Remember, we cannot accept late work. If you have any questions or concerns about the completion of these papers, please come and see me as soon as you can.

Essay One: Select one theme and apply it to ONE of the assigned primary source texts. Your completed essay must be TWO double-spaced, typed pages in length, using a standard font and standard one-inch margins.

Essay Two: Select one theme and apply it to TWO of the assigned primary source texts. Your completed paper must be THREE double-spaced, typed pages in length, using a standard font and standard one-inch margins.

Essay Three: Select theme number NINE, and apply it to TWO of the assigned, primary source texts as well as two out-of-class sources. (These may include books, articles, lectures.) Your completed essay must be FIVE double-spaced, typed pages in length, using a standard font and standard one-inch margins.

1. What do the various texts have to say about individual rights?
2. How do the various texts treat the role of class struggle in history?
3. How do the various texts present the relationship of humans and the natural world?
4. How is the presence of evil explained by the various texts?
5. Explain the relationship between the individual and society as presented in the various texts.

6. Explain the changing role of women in society as discussed by the various texts.
7. How do the various texts present the relationship of the soul and the body?
8. Discuss the role of faith versus reason as presented in the various texts.
9. Discuss the effects of the technological revolution on the institutions of Western society.

Western Civilization II Sample Assignment

Term Project

This 7-8 page (typed, double-spaced) project requires that you select four writers—covered WC II—and one course theme for a comparative discussion of an important course issue.

Preparatory Work and Deadlines

PROSPECTUS

[Date]___ submit one page that identifies your theme, question, and authors.

COMPLETED PROJECT

[Date]___ submit the completed paper at the final exam.

Assignment

Once you have made your selections you will need to follow these guidelines, keeping in mind that this paper should reflect your ideas and your assignment of the writers involved. Consequently, you should stick to the primary texts and concentrate on providing an in-depth analysis of the readings.

THESIS

Turn your theme into a question that represents an issue of ongoing concern from the 18th century Enlightenment period to the present day. (For example, under “nature and ultimately reality” you might analyze how views of human nature change by discussing writers such as Locke, Darwin, Marx and Freud.)

INTRODUCTION

Identify your authors. Explain your theme and question, and describe how they initially relate to Enlightenment attitudes as we see those attitudes develop in this course.

BODY

Provide an analysis of how each author addresses your question in relation to the other three. This should be an interwoven comparison of all four writers and not just a series of loosely connected summaries.

CONCLUSION

Put your authors into contemporary perspective by explaining how they do or do not fit into present-day attitudes on the issues raised by your question.

You do not need to consult outside sources, but if you decide to do so, be sure to document them adequately and correctly. Examples of proper documentation are available from me.

Part Two: Writing Strategies

In-Class Writing

In-class writing can take various forms from structured essays to informal group activities. The writing assignments described in the previous pages of this manual may be adapted for in-class use with some adjustment in focus and expectations. Additional suggestions follow this discussion.

Although in-class writing requires students to recall and process information in a short period of time, these assignments should not simply replicate exam questions that typically query multiple topics covered in the course. Rather, in-class essays should encourage students to develop and sustain a line of argument on a single well-focused topic of textual significance.

Points to Consider in Planning the In-Class Assignment:

- Expectations of length, depth of subject and level of polish need to be realistic.
- Most undergraduates can write approximately 500 words in a fifty-minute class period.
- Essay questions that are simple and succinct work best in this format. One or two-step activities (e.g. analyze, explain, agree/disagree) over one text are most successful for one-hour class periods.
- It is helpful to give students a quotation from the text which they can use as a point for further development or response.
- Give students adequate preparation ahead of time for the topics and texts you plan to use. To encourage specific textual references and adequate documentation, consider allowing them to use their books during the essay.
- Consider using the in-class writing as a draft which students can revise and develop more fully for additional points.

Sample Questions for In-Class Writing

1. WCI: Seneca tells his 1st-century Roman audience “the wise man is content with himself” (51). Based on what you know of Seneca from our reading selections, explain how this notion of contentment fits with the rest of Seneca's stoic philosophy.
2. WCII: Mary Shelley is often characterized as romanticizing the notion of alienation of the individual in her novel *Frankenstein*. What do you think? Does her monster show the complex sympathetic side of an alienated person, or simply the dark destructive force of an outcast?

Short Papers

The following instructions apply to journal entries, response-papers, blackboard dialogues, and other brief interactive writings. These assignments position teachers as coaches in the learning process rather than as primary readers and graders. Short,

informal writing offers students an opportunity to explore ideas, develop thoughts and skill with an emphasis on the process rather than the outcome of the assignment. Short writings can be used to:

- Incorporate course material
- Collect material for an assignment
- Organize data
- Generate topics
- Record and respond to class discussions
- Promote critical thinking

Examples:

Adapted from: Art Young's *Teaching Writing Across the Curriculum*. Prentice Hall, 2006.

1. Journals: Single or double-entry. (Double-entry journals are usually structured with facts from readings and lectures on the left and interpretation or reaction on the right.)
2. Response Papers: One-two page writings that focus on a particular theme, issue or passage from a text, or on a topic of discussion. Free-writing, mini-themes, and reports qualify.
3. Notes and Queries: Students provide a brief summary of material covered in a class session with at least one question about a concept that they did not understand. Then, each student passes the "note" to a class mate who responds to the query in writing by the next class period.
4. Blackboard Dialogues: Informal presentation of ideas in an accessible on-line format that is intended to spark discussion and raise questions for the instructor and other students.
5. Letters to the instructor: This is an expanded version of "Notes and Queries" where the student addresses questions to the instructor about difficult concepts, specific passages from a text, or perspectives of an author. Questions should be sufficiently developed to show student engagement with the material. (Instructors can use student questions as a basis for further discussion.)

When making any of the above assignments, consider the following points:

Writings may be assigned

- On a menu-basis with a list of topics.
- Prior to class, in preparation for class discussion.
- At the end of the class, in response to discussion.
- To generate or collect ideas.

Students need

- Written instructions on format, submission requirements, and deadlines.
- Information about the expected level of writing.
- Evaluation criteria and the value of the assignment in the overall course.

Grading

- Does not necessarily mean a letter grade.
- Quantitative grading may include a check or other indication of credit.
- Qualitative grading can include marginal or final comments on intellectual content and level of inquiry.

Essay Exams

Purposes for Asking Essay Exam Questions:

BY FUNCTION

To ask the student to

- summarize writing
- address a thesis presented in the question
- manipulate data presented in (or prior to) the question
- manipulate a quandary posed in the question
- analyze a problem

BY TYPE

To ask the student to

- test knowledge
- test comprehension
- promote higher order reasoning such as application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation

Characteristics of Effective In-Class Exam Questions

SPECIFIC: Vague questions promote waffling and keep students from doing their best.

APPROPRIATE : Questions should fit time allocation and type of response required.

SUCCINCT: Better that students use time writing answers than deciphering questions.

PRECISE: Pay attention to the specific types of writing required of students.

FAMILIAR : Introduce terminology prior to the exam using the list below.

Key Words in Essay Exams

Condensed from *Writers, Inc.: A Guide to Writing, Thinking & Learning*.

- *Analyze:* to break down or put together aspects of a whole in order to determine its nature.
- *Apply:* to put information to a special purpose.
- *Classify:* to place similar persons or things together in a group.
- *Compare:* to bring out points of similarity and difference, with emphasis on similarities.

- *Contrast*: to stress differences.
- *Criticize*: to point out the good points and the bad points of a situation or idea.
- *Define*: to give a clear, concise identification of the class to which a term belongs and how it differs from other things in that class.
- *Describe*: to recount or create a word picture in sequence or story form.
- *Diagram*: to organize in a pictorial way—a flow chart, a map, or some other graphic.
- *Discuss*: to examine and talk about an issue from all sides.
- *Enumerate*: to write in list or outline form a set of related facts, ideas, or issues.
- *Evaluate*: to make a statement of negative and/or positive worth and to back the statement with evidence.
- *Explain*: to bring out into the open, to make clear, and to clarify.
- *Illustrate*: to show by means of a picture, a diagram, or some other graphic aid, or to call forth specific examples or instances which create a verbal picture of a law, rule, or principle.
- *Interpret*: to explain, translate, or show a specific application of a given fact or principle that is beyond previously cited examples or instances.
- *Justify*: to tell, in a largely positive form, why a position or point of view is proper.
- *List*: a formal numbering or sequencing.
- *Outline*: to organize a set of facts or ideas in terms of main points and sub points.
- *Predict*: to state what is likely to occur based upon the best current information or inference.
- *Prove*: to give logical evidence as a base for clear, forthright argumentation.
- *Relate*: to show how two or more things are connected because of similar characteristics or reasons.
- *Review*: to examine or to summarize in chronological or in decreasing order of importance key characteristics of an overall body of facts, principles, or ideas.
- *State*: to present a concise statement of a position, fact, or point of view.
- *Summarize*: to present the main points of an issue in condensed form.
- *Synthesize*: to put together parts to form a whole (possibly more complex than the sum of the parts).
- *Trace*: to present—in step by step sequence—a series of facts which are somehow related either in terms of time, order of importance, or cause and effect.

Part Three: Evaluating Assignments

Evaluation of student work consists of commenting on and grading student papers. It is a two-step process that requires development of corresponding criteria to be effective. Instructors should establish this criteria—both for comments and grades—as they design their assignments, and the criteria should derive from the assignment itself.

RESPONDING

Instructors comment on student papers for several reasons: to show that the instructor has read the paper, to indicate strengths of the paper, to suggest improvements, and to explain reasons for the grade. The form and length of the comments need to be driven by the

purpose of the comment and the use that will be made of it. Comments may be marked on a checklist, written on a separate sheet of paper, or included on the student's paper as marginal or summary notations.

Some discipline-specific instructors hesitate to respond to students' writing, thinking of responding as grammar correction. If you have reservations, remind yourself what you want to teach the student about your field of study, and respond accordingly. Evaluate the text holistically, as an entire document that communicates ideas pertaining to your discipline. Then, the success of the paper can be measured by the extent to which the student succeeds in convincing you of the validity of his/her knowledge and point of view.

Responding with Marginal Comments

Marginal comments are written at the side of the text as annotations while summary comments appear at the end of the paper or on a separate sheet. Marginal comments help point out strengths and weaknesses in argument, ask for clarification, and indicate other views. As you write marginal comments, keep these points in mind:

You are neither proofreader, editor, or judge. You are a teacher from whom students hope to get help in improving reasoning in the subject area as well as support in how to communicate the reasoning according to the standards of the subject area.

Let students know when thinking, style, or organization is especially effective.

Avoid pinpointing matters of diction and sentence structure that are matters of taste. Do let students know when grammar, spelling, punctuation and word choice problems interfere with your ability to read the writing.

Responding with Summary Comments

Summary comments help record your overall impression of the paper, establish how successfully the student addressed the assignment, and point out future goals for the student. As you write summary comments, remember these points:

- Comment on strengths as well as weaknesses and on how well the student met the challenge of the assignment.
- Respond with questions and suggestions that the student can use in revising the paper or apply to future assignments.

GRADING

Grades should reflect and concur with comments, but comments should not be viewed as justification for a particular letter grade. While most assignments benefit from both forms of evaluation, some may need only one or the other. A letter grade or score may be adequate feedback for short writings, or comments alone may suffice for informal exercises. For most Western Civilization assignments, establishing clear grading guidelines is an important part of the evaluation process. Even if you are working from a

departmental standard, it is helpful to articulate for yourself and your students what constitutes each letter grade. Strategies for grading follow, and sample rubrics are included in the appendix of this manual.

In-Class Writing

Your expectations for in-class writing may vary significantly from what you expect students to accomplish in out-of-class assignments, and you may choose to weigh in-class writings less than take-home essays, but it is a good idea to apply your basic criteria consistently to all assignments. Even if you restrict the topic to a single task and text, and decide to ignore grammar, punctuation and spelling in in-class essays, there are a range of accomplishments that you reasonably can expect from this type of assignment:

- A clear thesis stated in the first paragraph
- A set of discernable sub points that support or develop the thesis
- Thorough coverage of the assigned topic or question
- Use of relevant evidence
- Readable sentences

Be sure that students know your standards and expectations ahead of time. You may want to consider allowing students to revise in-class writings for another grade for additional points.

Shorter Assignments

Shorter assignments need not be evaluated as polished products; they simply help students begin to see the value of writing for clarifying and developing their ideas.

Journals can be checked (a few each day or week) simply to see that work is completed. Out of class short writing can be read for content only: Did the student answer the question correctly, or get the main idea of the chapter?

The same can be done for preparatory writing: Do they show that the student is actually working on the assignment and making progress towards its completion?

Few or no comments need be written on any of these writings; teachers can respond with a simple check, plus, or minus, or with a point system.

Plagiarized Papers

Plagiarism presents one of the greatest challenges to the process of evaluating student writing. Plagiarism occurs in a variety of forms in the context of HWC assignments, and the process of identifying and responding to it can be time consuming for the instructor. While it may result from conscious cheating on the part of students, it also results from misunderstanding about what really constitutes plagiarized work. The most effective remedy is information: inform your students of the HWC Program's zero tolerance for cheating of any kind, and provide them with ample information to avoid plagiarizing. You should include the following statement, or some version of it, in your course syllabus.

I. Plagiarism Policy:

Plagiarism is a direct violation of intellectual and academic honesty. While it exists in many forms, all plagiarisms refer to the same act: representing somebody else's words or ideas as one's own. The most extreme forms of plagiarism are a paper written by another person, a paper obtained from a commercial source, or a paper made up of passages copied without acknowledgment from any format including online sources. Paraphrasing or summarizing authors' ideas or quoting even limited portions of their text without proper citation is also an act of plagiarism. Plagiarism in any of its forms is not tolerated by the University of Kansas or the Humanities and Western Civilization Program. It constitutes grounds for a failing grade for the course as well as the assignment in question. It is also grounds for academic probation, suspension, or expulsion as the individual case may warrant.

II. Recognizing Plagiarism:

Consider administering the following quiz to your students early in the semester to raise awareness of the different forms and complexity of plagiarism activity.

Plagiarism Quiz (True or False)

1. Handing in significant parts or the whole of a paper or an article from an author other than myself, granted that I acknowledge the author in a works cited page, is not plagiarism.
2. Common knowledge (composed of facts that can be found in a variety of sources and which many people know) does not need to be cited.
3. If I change a few words within a section of a source text and use that in my paper, then I am paraphrasing and not plagiarizing.
4. It is ok to simply copy and paste sections from Internet sources into my paper.
5. "My friend/parent helped with the paper. S/he wrote or rewrote part of it to make it more interesting or better. This wasn't plagiarism—I just got some help."

Answers:

1. False. Work turned in as your own must be original. It must be composed by you and contain your understanding of textual or empirical materials.
2. True. What are examples of common knowledge? The earth is round, John F. Kennedy was a U.S. president, the earth is the third planet from the sun, etc.
3. False. You also need to cite paraphrased material.
4. False. Internet sources also must be cited, and if used verbatim, they need to be quoted correctly. Keep in mind that internet sources can be unreliable and rarely provide the strongest material for a good argument.
5. False. Here plagiarism coincides with academic dishonesty. It is plagiarism because you are representing someone else's ideas and effort as your own. However, editing and proofing are not plagiarism, and talking things over with someone before writing is not plagiarism unless you base the thesis or major contents of your work on that conversation.

(Adapted from Wayne State University Library and Information Science Program.
<http://www.lisp.wayne.edu/services/plagquiz.>)

III. Avoiding Plagiarism

In Western Civilization classes the focus is on reading and understanding primary texts. Consequently, we discourage students from consulting outside sources for paper assignments. Nonetheless, many students persist in the use of such sources, and it is far better to make sure that they use them correctly than run the risk of plagiarism due to misunderstanding or mismanagement of material. Refer students to Part II, #2 of the HWC Student Writing Guide for specific help with citation and documentation formats. Review the following points with students early in the semester as part of an initial writing assignment:

In order to avoid plagiarism you must give credit when

- You use another person's ideas, opinions, or theories
- You use facts, data, graphics, drawings, music, etc. or any type of information that does not comprise common knowledge
- You use quotations from another person's spoken or written words
- You paraphrase another person's spoken or written words

Recommendations:

- Begin the writing process by stating your own ideas; then review the author's original work for connections.
- Use quotation marks and credit the source when you copy exact wording from the text—any text!
- Even when you paraphrase another author's writing, you must give credit to that author.
- If the form of citation and reference are incorrect, the attribution to the original author is likely to be incomplete, and can result in plagiarism. Use the HWC Writing Guide to avoid errors!

(Adapted from The School of Education, Indiana University
http://www.Indian.edu/%/7Eistd/plagiarism_test.html)

WRITING RESOURCES

For Instructors

As you use writing in Western Civilization, a number of resources are available to you and your students. Discipline specific writing references can be useful resources for both you and your students. Some are:

Anson, Chris M. and Lance E. Wilcox. *A Field Guide to Writing*. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

Marius, Richard. *A Short Guide to Writing about History*. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1989.

Steffens, Henry J. and Mary Jane Dickerson. *Writer's Guide: History*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1987.

See also these electronic resources, one of which is maintained at the University of Kansas:

Online University Teaching Centers: <http://www.ukans.edu/~sypherh/bc/onctr.html>

The World Lecture Hall: <http://www.utexas.edu/world/lecture>

For Students

The KU Writing Center, located on the 4th floor of Anschutz Library, provides writing assistance for students at various levels of need from basic through advanced. It is less a remedial service than a hands-on-helping effort with peer tutors from diverse academic backgrounds and disciplines who work out of satellite locations across campus. Help is available by appointment or on a walk-in basis. Students may call 864-2399 or visit the Writing Center Website at www.ku.edu/~writing.

Applied English Center (204 Lippincott—864 4606) is the best resource for ESL students. Besides being able to give you tips about how to talk with these students about reading and writing problems, they maintain a list of tutors interested in working with ESL students.

The Intercollegiate Athletics program has an extensive support service for its athletes, including tutoring and a writing lab.

KU Student Development Center (22 Strong Hall) provides tutoring services and skills workshops for students. Visit their website at www.ku.edu/%7Edevelop.

APPENDIX #1

WRITING TIPSHEETS

Use the following as needed in your classes. You may photocopy, adapt, edit or expand for your students.

Concision

- I. Concision is a leanness of words. It usually works by process of elimination: we ask ourselves if what we have said is essential to what we mean, and eliminate what is not. Concision makes writing easier to read and understand.
- II. Many students employ pompous academic style when writing college essays: big words, self-important phrasing, long prepositional phrases, a flat tone that attempts objectivity, excessive nouns, incorrect use of the passive voice. An example might sound like this:
To satisfy her hunger for nutrition, she consumed the bread.

The sentence's tone is too weighty for its message. Simplifying makes the sentence shorter and stronger:
She was hungry, so she ate bread.

- III. Here are some structural changes that will make your writing more concise:
 1. **Strong verbs**—use fewer linking verbs and less passive voice, and more active verbs
Original: The worthiness of honor is discussed in this stanza by Antigone.
Revised: Antigone argues that honor is a worthy pursuit.
 2. **Eliminate adjective phrases and clauses**—use short adjectives that precede the noun when needed
Original: The scene is very important because it helps the reader understand Aeneas early on in the poem.
Revised: This early scene helps the reader understand Aeneas.
 3. **Eliminate unessential adverbs**—choose the most appropriate verb that does not need adverbs
Original: Virgil's *Aeneid* carefully examines the effects of destiny on the main characters.
Revised: Virgil's *Aeneid* presents the effects of destiny.
 4. **Eliminate unnecessary prepositional phrases**—they make writing wordy
Original: The idea of discipline is encouraged by Seneca
Revised: Seneca encourages discipline.
 5. **Use parallelism to reduce repetitive words and phrases**
Original: Aeneas displays his heroic nature when he says good-bye to Dido and seeks out his father in the underworld, and later fights with Turnus in Latium.
Revised: Aeneas displays heroism when he leaves Carthage, traverses the underworld, and defeats Turnus.

Using Quotations

Direct quotations:

-Use key quotations. Paraphrase less important material.

-If you quote too little, you will not convince the reader of your argument.

-If you quote too much, it looks like you are either padding your paper or that you are unable to digest the material.

-When possible, use quotations that are short enough to be embedded in your own sentences. Sprinkle your paragraphs with several brief quotations rather than quoting one long passage.

Sandwich your quotations:

For each quote or example from the text, create a sandwich with the quote in the middle:

-Context

-Quotation

-Interpretation / Analysis

1. **Context:** The writer knows the context of a passage and where it comes from, but the reader sees only the passage itself, out of context. You need to introduce the quotation by indicating the context of the passage.

Example: The ancient Greeks considered women subordinate to men. As Ismene says to Antigone, “Remember we are women, we’re not born to contend with men” (ll. 73-74).

2. **Blend the Quotation:** There are several ways of incorporating short quotations.

Examples:

Ismene emphasizes the subordinate role of women when she says, “ We must submit in this and things still worse” (l.77).

Ismene gives Antigone the following advice: “We must submit in this and things still worse” (l.77).

3. **Analysis:** You must tell the reader why you have included the quotation. Connect it to your thesis by explaining how important it is to the point you are making.

Example: Ismene’s advice to Antigone that “we must submit in this and things still worse” (l. 77) shows her attempt to reason with Antigone in a traditional way. Clearly, this is an example of women’s subordination to men in ancient Greece.

Mechanics of quoting:

- If the quotation is a statement use the punctuation method above.
- If the quotation is a question or exclamation, place a ? or ! directly in front of the closing quotation marks; then punctuate as above.
- If the quotation could benefit from editing, use ellipses (. . .) to indicate words that have been removed.

APPENDIX #2

GRADING INFORMATION

The following guidelines were developed by Humanities and Western Civilization Graduate Teaching Assistants for general use by instructors in the HWC Program.

The Western Civilization Grading Manifesto

Thesis

- This category comprehends not only the thesis statement itself, but the degree to which the paper actually responds to the assignment. To that end, the following items should be developed in the most successful Western Civilization papers:
 - An easily identifiable and clear thesis statement
 - The thesis statement is concise, both in how it is stated and its potential scope
 - The argument necessary to prove the thesis statement is plausible and appropriate
 - The thesis and supporting argumentation clearly addresses the assignment

Organization

- This category looks not only at the structure of the paper as a whole, but the development of the argument in the paragraphs. The most successful papers will contain:
 - Concise paragraphs, introduced by strong topic sentences, which clearly relate to the thesis
 - Smooth transitions between paragraphs and points
 - Logical progression from one paragraph/point to the next, developing the central argument in a consistently coherent fashion

Use of Evidence

- Before analysis can be undertaken, there must be evidence from the assigned texts to support the argument being made. Successful Western Civilization papers will:
 - Limit the source of evidence to assigned/approved sources
 - Accurately portray the evidence (minimal “cherry-picking”) and the author’s point
 - Smoothly integrate evidence into the text of the paper
 - Present evidence only to support points relating to the thesis
 - Not compose a paper entirely from evidence taken from the sources
 - Proper citations for evidence from texts, whether paraphrased or quoted
 - Note: Academic Misconduct guidelines and procedures should be clearly identified long before the first paper is turned in.

Instructors should be granted some leeway in determining when improper citations rise to the level of misconduct

Critical Analysis

- Perhaps the most critical aspect of the successful Western Civilization paper, analysis of the evidence chosen is essential to the student’s success. As such, no other aspect of the papers should be stressed as much, or deemed as important to the overall mission of writing in Western Civilization. To meet these lofty goals, instructors should work with students to:

- Engage with course material in an innovative or critical way
- Encourage original argumentation, not regurgitation of analysis found in secondary sources
- Discourage mere summation of evidence already presented, particularly direct quotations
- Recognize, identify, develop and diffuse potential counter-arguments to the thesis

Mechanics

- Although instructors should always keep in mind that they are not proofreaders or editors, proper spelling, grammar and formatting must be encouraged. To this end, successful Western Civilization papers will demonstrate:
 - A grasp of the fundamentals of writing in the English language, including proper spelling, grammar, usage, and sentence construction
 - Note: Some allowance may be made, at the instructor's discretion, for non-native English speakers on this point
 - Proper formatting, particularly when formatting guidelines have been provided

Sample Rubric #1

THE “A” PAPER (90-100)

Thesis: The author presents a thesis which is clear, easily identifiable, concise (both in the manner in which it is stated and the scope of the argument it sets out), plausible, and sufficient to answer the assignment.

Organization: The author organizes the paper into concise paragraphs, each of which is guided by a strong topic sentence related to the thesis. Utilizing smooth and effective transitions, the author demonstrates a logical progression between paragraphs which consistently and coherently develops the central argument.

Use of Evidence: The author smoothly integrates an appropriate amount of evidence from the assigned/approved sources into the paper. The evidence chosen and the manner in which it is used effectively supports the arguments being made, as well as demonstrating an understanding of the source and a faithfulness to its message. All evidence is properly cited.

Critical Analysis: The author engages with course material in an innovative and/or critical fashion, avoiding the pitfalls of adopting secondary analysis and/or summarizing evidence rather than presenting an analysis of its relation to the thesis. The author also successfully identifies, develops, and diffuses potential counter-arguments.

Mechanics: The author demonstrates an attention to detail and a high standard of academic rigor by avoiding errors in spelling, grammar, usage, and sentence construction. All formatting guidelines and other instructions related to the presentation of the paper are followed explicitly.

THE “B” PAPER (80-90)

Thesis: The author presents a thesis which is slightly vague, not readily identifiable, slightly less than concise, difficult to prove, and unlikely to satisfactorily answer the assignment.

Organization: The organization creates paragraphs which are not overly long, but are also not concise. Although topic sentences are used, they are not strong and may show a weak relation to the thesis. While transitions may be choppy, there is still a largely logical progression to the paragraphs which demonstrate an effective construction of the central argument.

Use of Evidence: While the author uses evidence from the appropriate sources, there may be too much or too little of it, and the integration of that material may be slightly awkward. In nearly all cases the evidence effectively supports the arguments being made while accurately portraying the stance of the source. While citations are present for all evidence, there may be some errors in formatting.

Critical Analysis: While the author engages with the course material in an innovative or critical manner, some evidence is summarized instead of analyzed and/or there are instances where secondary sources provide the analysis. While the author identifies counter-arguments, they are not wholly neutralized.

Mechanics: The author attempts to uphold a high academic standard, but there are some errors in spelling, grammar, usage and sentence construction. Although formatting guidelines and other instructions were provided, there were not always followed.

THE “C” PAPER (70-80)

Thesis: The author presents a thesis which is vague, difficult to identify, not concise, difficult to prove, and fails to adequately address the assignment.

Organization: The author uses extremely weak topic sentences, or no topic sentences at all, often with the result that the paragraphs are overly long and fail to show a relationship to the thesis. Transitions are rough or non-existent, and the progression of the central argument through the arrangement of the paragraphs is muddled and often incoherent.

Use of Evidence: Most evidence is from appropriate sources, although the author draws some evidence from sources either not approved for use or inappropriate for scholarly work. The evidence is often presented solely for the sake of presenting evidence, rather than supporting an argument. Where evidence from appropriate sources is used, the evidence chosen shows evidence of cherry-picking or a failure to understand the author’s message. Although most evidence is supported by citations, some evidence has no citation or the formatting is flawed.

Critical Analysis: The author presents some innovative or critical arguments, but also shows a tendency to resort to secondary sources of analysis. When evidence is given, it is often summarized rather than analyzed. Although the author makes a nod towards a counter-argument, there is no effort to develop it or diffuse it.

Mechanics: The paper maintains an academic tone, but there are significant errors in spelling, grammar, usage, and sentence construction. Formatting largely ignores the guidelines.

THE “D” PAPER (60-70)

Thesis: The author presents a thesis which makes no claims, is nearly impossible to identify, makes no attempt to be concise, cannot be proved, and does not attempt to address the assignment.

Organization: Paragraphs have little or no relation to the thesis, largely as a result of a lack of topic sentences. The organization of the paragraphs shows little concern for the development of an argument.

Use of Evidence: The author’s use of evidence is very weak. When evidence is used, the author fails to show a relation to the thesis or any specific point. The author’s use of evidence misrepresents or shows a lack of understanding of the sources. Citations are inadequate, although not to the level of academic misconduct.

Critical Analysis: The author develops very few original arguments, let alone innovative or critical ones. There is a reliance on secondary sources for analysis, and after the presentation of evidence there may not even be a summary by the author. There is no attempt to consider, let alone diffuse, counter-arguments.

Mechanics: The author fails to present an academic tone, containing significant instances of slang and/or profanity. There is no evidence, based on the number of errors in

spelling, grammar, usage, and sentence construction that the author proofread the paper. The author does not follow the formatting guidelines in any way.

THE “F” PAPER (0-50)

Thesis: The paper lacks a thesis.

Organization: The organization of the paper creates confusion by failing to structure an argument of any kind, except perhaps a circular one.

Use of Evidence: There is no evidence from any of the course material presented in the paper.

Critical Analysis: The author fails to create an argument of any sort.

Mechanics: Due to errors in presentation, the paper is virtually unreadable.

Sample Rubric #2

The Good (80%-100%)

- _____ Thesis is concise, clear, easily identifiable, sufficiently addresses the assignment, plausible and appropriate
- _____ Concise paragraphs, strong topic sentences, smooth transitions, coherent and logical progression of argument
- _____ Assigned/approved sources, accurately portrayed, smoothly integrated, proper citations and adherence to style guide
- _____ Engages in an innovative/critical way, original arguments, no summary, addresses counter-arguments
- _____ Paper has no or minimal errors in spelling, usage, grammar, syntax, and formatting

The Bad (60%-79%)

- _____ Thesis is unclear and incorrectly placed, may be vague, simply descriptive, or confusing, may be based on misinterpretation
- _____ Confusing, disorganized paragraphs, no clear transitions, underdeveloped
- _____ Evidence inaccurately portrayed, not incorporated well, multiple critical errors in citation/style guide adherence
- _____ Analysis may be slightly insightful but generally either missing or mostly summary; may show a misunderstanding of the text
- _____ Unclear, difficult to read at times, simplistic and/or technical errors

The Ugly (59% and below)

- _____ Missing or very unclear thesis, may be based on misinterpretation of the question or prompt
- _____ Little focused development, disorganized paragraphs and sentences, paper does not flow
- _____ Little evidence cited or evidence from unapproved or inappropriate sources, failure to cite properly, no adherence to style guide
- _____ No analysis is present, or based on textual misinterpretations. "Analysis" is merely a textual summary
- _____ Significant errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, syntax, formatting that make the paper incomprehensible

Comments:

Grade: _____

Sample Rubric #3

	Criteria				Points
	A	B	C	D/F	
Thesis	Thesis is concise, clear, easily identifiable, sufficiently addresses the assignment, plausible and appropriate	Thesis is unclear or awkwardly formulated, may be only implied, may not be argued throughout	Thesis is unclear and incorrectly placed, may be vague, simply descriptive, or confusing, may be based in part on misinterpretation	Missing or very unclear thesis, may be based on misinterpretation of the question or prompt	—
Organization	Concise paragraphs, strong topic sentences, smooth transitions, coherent and logical progression of argument	Generally logical but confusing in places, some disorganized paragraphs or awkward transitions	Confusing, disorganized paragraphs, no clear transitions, underdeveloped	Little focused development, disorganized paragraphs and sentences, paper does not flow	—
Use of Evidence	Assigned/approved sources, accurately portrayed, smoothly integrated, proper citations and adherence to style guide	Sticks to approved sources but some “cherry-picking,” evidence not incorporated well, small errors in citations/style guide adherence	Evidence inaccurately portrayed, not incorporated well, multiple critical errors in citation/style guide adherence	Little evidence cited or evidence from unapproved or inappropriate sources, failure to cite properly, no adherence to style guide	—
Critical Analysis	Engages in an innovative/critical way, original arguments, no summary, addresses counter-arguments	Analysis slightly insightful but may include unnecessary summary, could achieve higher level of analysis	Analysis may be slightly insightful but generally either missing or mostly summary; may show a misunderstanding of the text	No analysis is present, or based on textual misinterpretations. “Analysis” is merely a textual summary	—
Mechanics	Paper has no errors in spelling, usage, grammar, syntax, and formatting	One or two small errors in grammar, syntax, or formatting	Unclear, difficult to read at times, simplistic and/or technical errors	Significant errors in mechanics, usage, grammar, syntax, formatting that make the paper incomprehensible	—
				Total---->	—

Sample Rubric #4

To grade a student's paper, use the numbers to evaluate the student's effectiveness at meeting the five learning goals associated with each of the five critical areas of paper evaluation. Average the scores for the evaluation areas and convert to a percentage (i.e. an average of 6.7 becomes 67%). Use this percentage on the weighting factor to determine the weighted score for each area. The total of these weighted scores becomes the final paper grade.

THESIS	Clear and identifiable thesis statement	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Concisely worded thesis statement	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Scope of the thesis is narrow	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Argument to support the thesis is plausible	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Thesis which answers the assignment	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<i>Average Score:</i>						<i>Convert to Percentage:</i>					
	<i>Weighting factor (suggested is 15):</i>						<i>Weighted Score:</i>					
ORGANIZATION	Concise, relevant paragraphs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Employs strong topic sentences	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Smooth transitions between paragraphs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Logical progression of paragraphs	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Consistent, coherent argumentation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<i>Average Score:</i>						<i>Convert to Percentage:</i>					
	<i>Weighting factor (suggested is 20):</i>						<i>Weighted Score:</i>					
USE of EVIDENCE	Evidence is from appropriate sources	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Evidence accurately represents the source	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Evidence smoothly integrated	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Evidence relevant and useful	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Evidence cited properly	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<i>Average Score:</i>						<i>Convert to Percentage:</i>					
	<i>Weighting factor (suggested is 30):</i>						<i>Weighted Score:</i>					
CRITICAL ANALYSIS	Engages material innovatively/critically	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Makes original arguments	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Avoids summation	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Identifies counter-arguments	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Diffuses counter-arguments	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<i>Average Score:</i>						<i>Convert to Percentage:</i>					
	<i>Weighting factor (suggested is 30):</i>						<i>Weighted Score:</i>					
MECHANICS	Proper spelling	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Correct grammar	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Proper sentence construction	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Proper academic tone	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	Follows formatting guidelines	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	<i>Average Score:</i>						<i>Convert to Percentage:</i>					
	<i>Weighting factor (suggested is 5):</i>						<i>Weighted Score:</i>					
TOTAL SCORE:												