Topics

Part I presents topics you might consider prior to starting your course.

Notes

Topic 1
Designing and planning your writing course

Before you begin teaching the course, you must establish a plan. The advice in this topic can help you design an effectively sequenced schedule for a process-based writing course.

Mapping out a writing course

Each instructor has a different method for establishing a course schedule. Some instructors like to work organically, assigning projects inspired by current events or the students' own experiences. Other instructors approach their tasks systematically, planning assignments for the entire semester before the first day of class. If you're just starting your career as an instructor, a thorough plan might work best. This topic offers tips for adopting a systematic approach.

Begin by identifying your course outcomes.   Find out what your department expects your course to accomplish by asking questions such as the following:

- When students exit a course at this level, what skills are they expected to have acquired?

- Does this class require specific types of assignments, such as in-class timed writing or long-term research papers?

- How does your course serve the school? Is it a prerequisite for other courses?

Your department liaison should be able to provide this information for you. If the department isn't able to furnish you with official course outcomes, you can find the information you need by reviewing the syllabi of other instructors.

Learn about your context.   Once you've identified the course outcomes, learn as much as possible about your student population. Even though you will not have met your students at this stage in the planning process, you can anticipate trends and patterns by asking your department chair or other instructors, or by performing a quick search on your school's Web site. (Many school Web sites include pages that list student statistics.) Knowing this information will help you tailor your assignments

Questions to ask about students in your context

Experience

- Will your classes be filled with traditionally aged college students, who likely have some prior knowledge of traditional rhetorical essay forms (such as the five-paragraph model), argumentation strategies, and citation conventions?

- Will you have any nontraditional students who are returning to school after years in the workforce or at home?

- Do many students in your context typically come from high schools that don't require much writing?

- Are many of your students coming out of developmental courses that might require no more than paragraph-length writing?

- Have all the students in your class followed your school's typical writing course sequence, or have some taken other writing-intensive courses outside of your department?

- Are any honors students enrolled in your course?

Goals

- What are your students' majors?

- Are all the students following the same degree track (AS, AA, BS, BA, and so on)?

- In general, how many writing-intensive courses will students take after they complete your course?

Workload, time management, and special considerations

- What is your ratio of part-time to full-time students?

- Do students in your context typically have part-time or full-time responsibilities (either in or outside the home) in addition to their college work? How are these commitments likely to affect their participation in your course?

- Will you have student athletes who may miss classes for games or other events? If so, what is your school's policy for accommodating athletes?

- Will you have a large number of multilingual writers who will need help with language development as well as writing skills? What additional services (tutors or writing labs, for example) does your school provide for such students?

- Are any students registered with the disabilities service office at your school? If so, what accommodations will they require?

to meet your students' general needs and build in enough steps to scaffold your assignments effectively.

Determine the number and types of assignments you'll require.   Many process-based writing courses for first- and second-year students build in four to six major writing assignments per semester, sometimes with additional informal writing tasks. The number and types of assignments you can offer will depend heavily on the background knowledge and prior experience of your students. The less experienced your students are, the more steps you will likely have to build into each assignment. If you expect that you will have to accommodate a wide range of skill levels, consider planning a few challenging assignment variations for more advanced students.

If you will be serving a nontraditional or other specific population (for instance, second-career students, student athletes, multilingual writers, developmental writers, or students with disabilities), try to include assignments that accommodate their needs and guide them toward achieving the course goals. Better yet, think about assignments that might draw on their particular talents and experiences.

If you're uncertain about the types of assignments to require, ask your department chair or other instructors for samples.

Establish benchmarks for achievement.   Consider creating a rubric, a grid that matches essay features with descriptions of various levels of achievement, to establish benchmarks for your course. More simply, describe in detail the standard features of an A or excellent paper, a B or above-average paper, and so on. Include specific descriptions of the features you plan to assess, such as development, organization, expression and style, and sentence-level control. If discussion and peer review will contribute to the grade, clarify those expectations as well.

For a sample rubric and additional discussion, see "Work with rubrics" in Topic 3, "Responding to student writing."

Although not all papers will fit neatly into these grade categories, the rubric can provide a general structure that will help both you and your students. If you choose, you can attach the rubric to your syllabus so that students are aware of your grading standards from the beginning of the course, and you can use assignment-specific versions of this rubric when you assess student work.

Set due dates at regular intervals over the semester.   After you have determined the number of assignments, rough out the due dates by dividing the number of weeks in the semester by the number of assignments you plan to give. For example, in a fifteen-week course with five major assignments, you can plan to devote approximately three weeks to each assignment, making adjustments for shorter or more demanding tasks as necessary. Distributing major assignments throughout the course benefits students and instructors. Students will have sufficient time for planning, drafting, and revising, and you will have enough time to evaluate papers and offer feedback before the next major assignment is due.

Build in enough time for writing, review, and revision.   When planning the course, begin with a simple timeline that maps the number of class periods you'll have with your students and the number of assignments you'll give. For each assignment, reserve a minimum of three class sessions for planning and review:

- At least one class session for explaining the assignment and previewing models
- At least one session for reviewing preliminary drafts (sometimes, scheduling two or more days is preferable). This review period allows for both peer feedback and your feedback on the draft.

- One session (or a partial session), at the time papers are returned or shortly after, for students to ask questions about your comments and begin to apply your feedback

If possible, consider adding days for students to plan or draft the essay in class, perform self-assessments, review citation conventions, and conduct research. In addition, give yourself sufficient time to grade and return assignments before students begin the next paper. (One week is typically a realistic target for a class of twenty-five to thirty-five students.) Sprinkle in additional skill-building activities on other days: preparing for assignments with reading and discussion, reviewing sentence-level issues and working on exercises, and generating ideas with in-class or informal writing assignments.

Here's a sample assignment schedule for a class that meets three times a week:

	Monday	Wednesday	Friday
Week 1	Discuss a reading to prepare for an assignment.	Introduce the assignment and preview model essays.	**Outline due.** Discuss organization and content, perhaps as a peer review session.
Week 2	Hand back the previous assignment, and review feedback in class.	**Draft 1 due.** Lead students through a self-assessment, checking for purpose and the use of sources (or other assignment requirement).	Revision workshop: Discuss model introductions and conclusions from the handbook.
Week 3	**Draft 2 due.** Conduct a peer review workshop.	Editing workshop: Review a sentence-level topic from the handbook (such as commas) and discuss editing strategies.	**Final draft due.** Write a cover letter in class.

Determining assignment sequences

When you design assignments for your course, create opportunities for students to build on skills they have previously practiced. Begin with an assignment that requires the fewest new skills. Then, with each subsequent assignment, increase the challenge by requiring the use of one or two new skills that you've covered in class.

> ## Sample assignment sequence for a beginning-level writing course
>
> **Assignment 1: Basic essay**   Focus on three basic features: purpose (thesis statement), organization (topic sentences and appropriate transitions), and development (coherent paragraphs with the use of concrete details).
>
> **Assignment 2: Summary or simple analysis of one text**   Focus on quoting, paraphrasing, and using signal phrases, along with basics from Assignment 1.
>
> **Assignment 3: Analysis essay in MLA style (one text)**   Focus on critical thinking (inference) and MLA style.
>
> **Assignment 4: Analysis essay in MLA style (two texts)**   Require two texts so that students learn to refer to more than one author and practice synthesizing sources; focus on analytical (evaluative) thinking.
>
> **Assignment 5: Research paper in MLA style (multiple sources)**   Require research and the evaluation of sources, more sophisticated signal phrases, and more complex citations in the works cited list.

In a first-semester writing course, for example, you could begin with a relatively simple essay assignment that focuses on the basics of purpose (crafting a thesis), organization (planning topic sentences), and development (writing effective paragraphs). The next essay might require students to add one new focus to the previous three: the integration of one source. The third essay could build on the first two assignments by requiring the use of two sources cited in MLA style. Continue scaffolding the assignments in manageable steps. See the sample assignment sequence for a beginning-level writing course.

Striking a balance between global and local issues

Novice writers typically need help with learning to analyze texts, construct arguments, structure their thoughts, and develop an academic voice. Often they also need help with recognizing sentence-level errors in their own work and using resources (such as the handbook) to find answers to their questions. Finding the time to address these needs in class is challenging, and you may struggle to balance your coverage of global issues (such as critical thinking, analysis, and research) with local issues (such as paragraphing and punctuation).

To ensure that students devote enough attention to both global and local writing issues, build a series of "workshop" days into the course calendar. For each writing assignment, schedule at least one workshop during the drafting stage to address global issues and at least one workshop during the revision stage to address local issues. Let the needs of your students and the demands of the assignment determine the topics you cover in each workshop. Ask students to prepare for these workshop sessions by bringing drafts of their papers. Structure each session so that students have time to write, review, or otherwise engage with their own work in class.

Conduct a workshop on global issues during the drafting stage. Early in the writing process, conduct at least one workshop in which students consider global strategies. For instance, if your students are working on an essay with an argumentative purpose, you can begin the workshop by discussing the argumentation strategies outlined in the handbook or reader. Review any sample thesis statements or outlines that the handbook or reader provides, and ask students to compare their work to the models. Give the students an opportunity to share their ideas and receive feedback, either from the whole class or from a few peers.

Conduct a workshop on local issues during the revision stage. Later in the writing process, after students have drafted their papers, guide them through one or more revision and editing workshops focused on local issues. For example, you might begin an editing workshop by discussing the sections in the handbook that cover comma usage. Review a few flawed sentences (either from the handbook exercises or from students' own papers) and work together to correct them by applying tips from the handbook. Then give students an opportunity to check their own work for similar errors and to receive feedback from you or from a few peers. See the sample workshop series for additional ideas.

Sample workshop series for an argument essay assignment

Day 1 (global issues) Discuss a few argument and persuasion readings; assign a position paper on a related topic. Have students brainstorm possible positions or topics with their peers.

Day 2 (global issues) Students bring rough outlines to class. Review model thesis statements from the handbook and lead students through a peer review of their rough outlines. Have students discuss whether their own thesis statements are debatable. Encourage them to revise their thesis statements, seeking feedback from you or from peers as necessary.

Day 3 (global issues) Students bring skeletal drafts or developed outlines to class. Review the content and organization of a few model outlines or papers. Discuss ethical, emotional, and logical appeals, and look for examples of these appeals in the models. Ask students to exchange their work with a few peers to evaluate the quality of their own appeals. Encourage them to revise the content of their outlines in class.

Day 4 (local issues) Students bring complete drafts to class. Discuss the sections in the handbook that cover coherent paragraphs and cohesive elements (transitions). Ask students to revise for coherence in class, exchanging papers with peers for additional feedback. (Students having trouble with coherence may find that they need to return to global revision and reconsider the overall structure of their essays.)

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Day 5 (local issues)   Students bring revised drafts to class. Discuss the handbook section on run-on sentences, and answer any questions students may have about the practice exercises. Ask students to exchange papers to identify run-on sentences in their peers' work. Once students have identified errors, have them return papers to the owners for editing.

Day 6 (local issues)   Students bring final drafts to class. Discuss the section on commas from the handbook, and review a few of the practice exercises. Ask students to do last-minute editing for commas before they submit their papers for grading.

Integrating the handbook

Your handbook is much more than just a grammar reference book or citation tool. You can weave selections from the handbook into your course schedule at all stages of the writing process, from planning and composing to researching and evaluating sources to revising paragraphs and editing sentences. Scan the table of contents for topics that you will be covering, and assign sections as background reading for class discussions. Review the sample paragraphs and model essays in class to introduce or reinforce specific formatting and rhetorical advice. If necessary, assign the practice exercises for some topics (such as thesis statements and citations) to the whole class and reserve exercises on other topics (such as apostrophes and parallelism) for individual students with particular trouble spots.

The more students use the handbook under your guidance, the more comfortable they will become with using it on their own. If possible, take time to show students how to navigate the text to find specific advice. Doing so will help them understand why they have been asked to purchase the book and how the book can help them beyond a single assignment or the composition course. Consider using a scavenger hunt as a pairs activity that asks students to locate specific content in the handbook.

See hackerhandbooks.com/ teaching for a sample scavenger hunt.

Designing a syllabus

The syllabus is the contract between you and your students, and as such it should include information that supports both you and them. Many schools have specific guidelines for the design or structure of a syllabus. Ask your department chair or liaison to provide you with a model before you write yours. If your school does not have specific guidelines, include at least the following details: your contact information, the course description and outcomes, required textbooks, and key policies (see the box "Sections of a syllabus" for details). Add any other information you think will be valuable to you and your students.

Turn to the back of this collection and visit hackerhandbooks.com/ teaching for a variety of sample syllabi.

Sections of a syllabus

Critical components

- Course information: number, section, meeting times, dates, location
- Instructor contact information: name, office location, phone number, e-mail address, office hours
- Textbooks: titles, authors, where to purchase
- Grading policy: distribution of assignments, grade scale
- Attendance policy
- Late and makeup work policy
- Academic integrity or plagiarism policy
- Class schedule: a list of readings and assignments or directions for finding the class schedule (if posted online, for example)
- Any other sections mandated by your department or school

Additional sections

- Writing lab location, hours, policies
- Services for students with disabilities
- Services for multilingual students
- Descriptions of major assignments
- Formatting directions for papers
- A grading rubric

When you introduce students to your syllabus, take time to point out the course objectives and how the assignments relate to those objectives. In addition, explain key terms, such as *academic writing* or *analytical essay*, that will make the formal descriptions in the syllabus more meaningful to students. Referring to the syllabus throughout the semester will help students adhere to general guidelines and the course schedule. If possible, post a copy online for easy reference.

The following sample syllabus shows one instructor's use of *The Bedford Handbook* in a twelve-week introductory composition course for traditional students. Note the course information that the instructor provides, the sequence of assignments, and the use of the handbook throughout the term.

ENG 101: College Composition 1

Meeting times: Tu and Th, 9:00–10:30 a.m.
Instructor: Professor Gray
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx
E-mail: gray@yourcollege.edu
Office: Merton Hall, Room 214
Office hours: M, W, F, 8:00–10:00 a.m.

Course description

College Composition 1 is designed to prepare you to write essays in academic English. You will learn to plan, draft, and revise analytical and argument essays, and you will learn to write a research paper that follows MLA conventions for citations and formatting.

Course outcomes

- Students will show competence in structuring academic essays.
- Students will show competence in revising and editing their own work.
- Students will write a research paper that shows competence in using MLA conventions for in-text citations and the works cited list.
- Students will learn that writing is a collaborative effort, made stronger by peer review and feedback.

The syllabus defines course outcomes and shows students what is expected of them and what they can expect from the course.

Textbooks (available in the college bookstore)

The Bedford Reader, Tenth Edition (Kennedy, Kennedy, and Aaron)
The Bedford Handbook, Eighth Edition (Hacker/Sommers)

Assignments and grade distribution

Assignment 1 (all drafts): 10%
Assignment 2 (all drafts): 15%
Assignment 3 (all drafts): 20%
Assignment 4 (all drafts): 30%
Homework and workshop participation: 25%
A=90–100%, B=80–89%, C=70–79%, D=60–69%, F=59% or less

Attendance policy

Because this is a workshop class, your participation is important and determines your ability to succeed. You are expected to attend every class. If you must be absent, please obtain notes or missed work from a classmate. You are allowed two absences without penalty; each additional absence will reduce your final grade by one-half letter.

Grading, attendance, and makeup policies are clearly established to guide and protect students and instructors.

Late and makeup assignment policy

In general, no late assignments are accepted, and no makeup credit is granted. If you have an emergency situation, please contact me (by e-mail or phone) within twenty-four hours of the missed class session to determine whether alternative arrangements can be made. Expect to provide official documentation to prove your need to be absent.

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Academic integrity

All of the work you submit in this class must be your own. When you integrate sources from other writers' work into your own papers, you must use formal citations in MLA style. Plagiarism—whether intentional or accidental—will not be tolerated and is subject to penalty. The minimum penalty is an F on the assignment; the maximum is dismissal from the college. For more information, please see the Student Guidebook, section 7.24.

The academic integrity statement makes students aware of the consequences of plagiarism, including accidental plagiarism.

Special services

The Writing Lab (Garcia Center, Room 224) offers free services to all students. I encourage you to take your drafts to the lab for additional feedback.

If you are a student with a disability, please register with the Disability Service Office (Garcia Center, Room 132) to be eligible for academic accommodations.

The syllabus points out services for students with special needs.

Important dates

Last day to add/drop this course: 9/15
Last day to withdraw with a W on your transcript: 11/4

ENG 101 Course Schedule

Week 1

Tu Introduction to the course
- Review syllabus

Th Diagnostic essay (in class)
- Preview the table of contents in both textbooks.

Week 2

Tu Editing workshop: Sentence boundaries; edit diagnostic essay
- Handbook: Fragments (19) and run-ons (20)
- **Edited essay due at the end of class**

Th Active reading; prepare for Assignment 1
- Reader: Chapter 1
- Handbook: Annotating texts (4a); being an active reader (55a)

Week 3

Tu Planning and drafting; thesis statements
- Handbook: Planning (1a-1d) and drafting (1e-1g); thesis statements (5c)

Th Revision workshop: Paragraphing; concrete details
- Handbook: Paragraphs (3)
- **Draft 1 due in class for the workshop**

Week 4

Tu Editing workshop: Strong verbs
- Handbook: Active verbs (8); shifts (13); subject-verb agreement (21)
- **Draft 2 due in class for the workshop**

Th Preview analysis assignment
- Handbook: Writing about texts (4)
- **Assignment 1 final draft due**

Week 5

Tu Discuss reading; prepare for assignment
- Reader: Chapters 3 and 5
- Handbook: Review model essay (4e and 4f)

Th Revision workshop: Integrating sources
- Handbook: Integrating sources (52)
- **Draft 1 due in class for the workshop**

Week 6

Tu Editing workshop: Focus on punctuation
- Handbook: Commas (32 and 33); quotation marks (37)
- **Draft 2 due in class for the workshop**

Th Argument and persuasion
- Reader: Chapter 6
- **Assignment 2 final draft due**

The instructor previews the handbook with the students early in the term to familiarize them with its contents.

The instructor integrates the handbook at all stages of the writing process: planning, drafting, revising, and editing.

The instructor reserves several sessions for the planning and review of each assignment.

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Week 7

Tu Argumentation
- Handbook: Constructing reasonable arguments (5)

Th Discuss reading; prepare for assignment
- Handbook: Review model essay (5h)

Week 8

Tu Revision workshop: Focus on argumentation
- Handbook: Supporting claims (5e); countering opposing arguments (5f)
- **Draft 1 due in class for the workshop**

Th Editing workshop: Focus on word choice
- Handbook: Wordy sentences (16); appropriate language (17); exact words (18)
- **Draft 2 due in class for the workshop**

Week 9

Tu Preview research assignment
- Reader: Chapter 11
- Handbook: Highlights of one student's research process (54b) and sample research paper (54c)
- **Assignment 3 final draft due**

Th Choosing research topics
- Handbook: Conducting research (46)

Week 10

Tu Evaluating sources
- Handbook: Evaluating sources (47)
- **Tentative thesis due**

Th Research: Visit the library to learn about databases and to find at least one source
- Bring your handbook to the library; refer to the Citation at a glance on page 552

Week 11

Tu Planning workshop: Structure
- Handbook: Review outlines (1d)
- **Outline due in class for the workshop**

Th Revision workshop: Focus on support and avoiding plagiarism
- Bring research materials to class
- Handbook: Managing information and avoiding plagiarism (48 and 51)
- **Draft 1 due in class for the workshop**

Week 12

Tu Editing workshop: Focus on citations
  - Handbook: Review integrating sources in MLA papers (52)
  - **Draft 2 due in class for the workshop**

Th Editing workshop: Focus on final edits
  - Handbook: Review commas (32) and quotation marks (37)
  - **Assignment 4 final draft due**

Topic 2
Designing effective assignments

The quality of student writing can sometimes reflect the quality of the assignment. Clear, meaningful assignments often lead to insightful responses and student investment. Vague or confusing assignments may frustrate students or distract them from the course's objectives, thwarting growth and achievement. The advice in this topic will help you craft assignments that provide guidance and support for your students.

Determining the objectives of an assignment

Each assignment is an opportunity for students to show what they have learned and to move toward the designated outcomes for your course. Before creating an assignment, consider your students' experience level and which of the course objectives they are prepared to fulfill. The assignment outcomes should mirror one or more of these course objectives.

Remember that students probably will not be prepared to fulfill all the objectives from the start of the term but instead will need to build skills slowly. Consider the chart on setting assignment objectives (p. 18), which shows the correlation between course objectives and two assignments in a first-year course. The first assignment, a beginning analytical essay, requires students to focus on a few basic course objectives: showing reading comprehension, writing thesis statements and topic sentences, developing paragraphs, and using the writing process. The second assignment, a final research project that is the fifth assignment in the course, shifts to more advanced course objectives. These objectives, which include evaluating sources, using citation conventions, and writing a research paper, can be accomplished only after students have developed a solid foundation in basic essay writing.

For more information on the order of assignments, see "Determining assignment sequences" in Topic 1.

Setting assignment objectives that help students accomplish course objectives

THE COURSE **Student objectives for a first-year course**	THE ASSIGNMENTS **Student objectives for a beginning analytical essay (Assignment 1)**	
Read and show comprehension of college-level texts	Write a thesis in response to an analytical prompt	**Basic skills**
Formulate effective thesis statements for analytical essays	Develop the essay with paragraphs that use topic sentences to support the thesis	**Basic skills**
Develop essays with paragraphs that support the thesis; write paragraphs that include details and concrete evidence to support generalizations (topic sentences)	Use evidence from the source text to support the thesis and topic sentences	**Intermediate skills**
Use the writing process to draft, revise, and edit materials	Draft, revise, and edit the paper	**Intermediate skills**
	Student objectives for a research project (Assignment 5)	
Formulate an effective thesis for at least one argumentative research essay	Articulate a clear position that can be backed by research	**Advanced skills**
Learn to conduct research and evaluate sources	Integrate at least five credible sources in the paper	**Advanced skills**
	Draft, revise, and edit the paper	**Advanced skills**
Show skill in using MLA style for page formatting, in-text citations, and a list of works cited	Format the paper in MLA style; include in-text citations and a list of works cited	**Advanced skills**

Choosing a topic and crafting an assignment

After spending some time with your students, you will be the best judge of which topics will engage their interests and help them achieve course objectives. However, if you are just starting the semester, you may want to consult your course reader for inspiration or ask seasoned instructors in your department for sample assignments.

Once you have determined the objectives for an assignment and chosen the topic, you will be prepared to draft the wording of the overview, the first part of the assignment. The overview typically takes the form of questions, specific prompts, or open-ended prompts.

Sample assignment overviews

Questions

Write a well-focused one-to-two-page essay on the following question:

In the article "Surfing's Up and Grades Are Down," Rene Sanchez examines the effects that computers have on college students' education and lives. **What are some of the <u>negative effects</u> that computers can have on students' academic success, according to the author? Support your answer with specific details from the text.**

Specific prompts

Develop a two-to-three-page essay on the following prompt:

In "Weasel Words," William Lutz shows how advertisers use different types of misleading words to encourage people to buy their products. **Explain how "weasel words" used in advertising distort the truth, according to Lutz.**

Open-ended prompts

Write a six-to-eight-page research paper about a topic related to your major or intended career. The thesis of your paper should argue for a change in a specific approach or policy. Use at least five credible sources to support your thesis. Format your paper using MLA style conventions.

Novice writers working on beginning-level assignments often benefit from narrow, straightforward questions or prompts that help them focus their thoughts. Advanced writers who have had practice articulating thesis statements and developing ideas in cohesive essays can often handle more open-ended projects.

As you draft the assignment overview, make the goals and outcomes explicit. Doing so will help you create an assignment within the students' skill range and avoid setting goals that students are not yet equipped to meet. Specifically, include key terms relevant to your course or subject, directives (such as *discuss*, *explain*, *analyze*, *argue*, *trace*, *compare*, *contrast*, and *synthesize*), and other guidelines (such as *support your response with at least three examples from the text*) that clarify the purpose of the assignment. In class, take time to explain the key terms and directives to your students, who might not fully understand what words such as *trace* or *synthesize* entail.

Creating a sequence of steps within an assignment and integrating the handbook

When you design the steps of an assignment, split the larger tasks into manageable chunks and set a due date for each step. Provide several checkpoints—especially for research projects and longer analysis papers—so that students can receive guidance from you or from their peers long before their final drafts are due. Dividing assignments into smaller steps will help students avoid both procrastination and plagiarism.

The objectives you have already established for the project will help you determine the specific steps to assign. Depending on the assignment outcomes and your students' needs, you can set due dates for individual student tasks such as a project topic, a tentative thesis, an outline, a list of sources, and multiple drafts. The following chart provides a sample sequence of lesson steps and student tasks leading to a final research project.

Sequencing the steps of an assignment

Lesson steps	Student tasks
1. Discuss the handbook's coverage of choosing a topic and review the sample research paper.	Develop a list of three to five possible topics. Exchange feedback in a peer review session.
2. Discuss thesis statements. Practice with the handbook's print or online thesis exercises.	Settle on a topic and write a tentative thesis. Submit the thesis to the instructor for preliminary approval.
3. Discuss the handbook sections on conducting research and evaluating sources.	Find at least five sources. Bring them to class for a source-evaluation workshop.
4. Review the handbook's coverage of end citations and complete related exercises in class.	Create a list of end citations for your sources. Submit it to the instructor for feedback.
5. Review sample outlines in the handbook and discuss tips on organizing information.	Create a tentative outline. Receive feedback in a peer review session.
6. Review the handbook section on making global revisions.	Bring your first draft to class for a peer review session. Focus on global issues.

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7. Discuss the handbook sections on integrating sources, avoiding plagiarism, and revising sentences.	Bring your second draft to class for a peer review session. Focus on in-text citations and sentence-level editing.
8. Ask students to share specific editing challenges. Review topics and discuss corresponding print or online handbook exercises.	Proofread your final draft and submit it for evaluation.

Providing explicit instructions

After you have drafted the assignment overview and determined the individual tasks your students will undertake, create explicit instructions for students to follow. To provide thorough support, include the following:

- An overview of the assignment (the question or prompt, including the specific objectives of the assignment)

- A brief explanation of the purpose of the assignment, showing how it relates to the outcomes of the course

- A list of the required tasks and their due dates

- Specific formatting and submission requirements, if any

- Evaluation guidelines (such as a list of the specific features of a successful paper or a copy of the rubric you will use to assess the work)

- A list of extra tips or resources, such as relevant sections of the handbook, to which students can refer during the writing process

For additional help, see the sample assignment handout at the end of this topic.

ENG 101

Assignment 2: Text Analysis Essay

Overview

In standard written English, write a two-to-three-page academic essay using MLA conventions for formatting, in-text citations, and a works cited list. Your essay should respond directly to the following prompt and **must** include properly cited **direct quotations** and **paraphrases**.

Prompt: In "The Roots of War," Barbara Ehrenreich compares war to "an infectious disease." How are war and disease alike, according to Ehrenreich? Is this an appropriate, reasonable metaphor?

The overview clarifies the objectives of the assignment.

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to give you practice using MLA conventions for formatting, quoting, paraphrasing, and documenting sources. This assignment builds on the basic essay-writing skills you learned in Assignment 1.

The purpose section points out the relevance of the assignment.

Due dates for assignment tasks

(Note: TBH=*The Bedford Handbook*)
9/1: Tentative thesis statement and rough outline (see 50a and 50b in TBH)
9/3: List of possible sources: must include citation information
9/5: Preliminary draft (#1): must include *at least* a thesis statement and body paragraphs
9/10: Revised draft (#2): must include the introduction, body, and conclusion
9/15: Final draft (#3)

The sequence of steps reinforces writing as a process and helps students avoid plagiarism. References to the handbook provide students with extra support.

Formatting instructions

Use MLA conventions for formatting, in-text citations, and a works cited list. Do not use a title page.

Evaluation guidelines

Excellent (A grade) papers will display the following characteristics:
- A thesis that clearly states your position on the topic
- Body paragraphs that support the thesis effectively
- Fluidly integrated in-text citations for both direct quotations and paraphrases
- An organizational pattern that advances the thesis and suits your purpose and audience
- Carefully crafted sentences in standard academic English
- An accurate works cited list and page formatting in MLA style

Evaluation guidelines set standards for achievement.

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Extra help

- Review the information on integrating sources and avoiding plagiarism (see 51 and 52 in TBH).
- If you have any specific questions about your draft, stop by my office (Johnston Hall, 156-B) during my office hours or visit the Writing Center in LeCrone Hall, Room 204.

Additional tips point students to sections in the handbook and resources on campus that can help them produce successful drafts.

Topic 3
Responding to student writing

It's not *in* class but *after* class that many writing instructors begin their most demanding work — that of evaluating student papers. Your feedback is key to your students' growth as critical thinkers and effective communicators, but you have only so much time to evaluate their work. The advice in this topic can help you provide useful feedback without overextending yourself.

Understanding the purposes of responding

Many instructors, particularly those who are just starting their careers, may feel overwhelmed by the task of responding to student writing. In outcome-driven, skill-oriented programs, in particular, some instructors may feel responsible for addressing all of their students' errors with every assignment. It may be helpful to pause and reflect on the purpose of responding, which — ultimately — is to empower students to become stronger communicators. Your role as a writing instructor is not to point out every flaw in a student's paper or to edit every mistake; rather, your role is to establish (with the student's input) manageable targets for learning and growth. Keep the following points in mind as you comment on your students' drafts.

Provide students with specific tools. Teacher responses help students build skills. Written responses on student papers and oral feedback provided during teacher-student conferences are perhaps the most beneficial when they provide specific, targeted advice that students can understand and apply immediately (in the same paper) or shortly thereafter (in a future draft or assignment). (See the sample comment on student writing on page 26.)

Animal rights activists are often portrayed as menacing. Many times, I have noticed that their coverage of stories involving animal rights groups focuses on the activists' harsh accusations or damages to property, rather than the plight of the animals they want to protect.

Whose coverage? See 23d in the handbook. Try doing a few online exercises for pronoun reference. Also, jotting down "pronoun reference, 23d" in your editing log might prompt you to check for this error in your next draft.

Create a scaffold for future growth.   It is difficult, particularly when working with novice writers, to look beyond numerous surface errors and structural flaws. Remember that writing development is slow and recursive and that you can help students learn to review their own work and introduce them to tools for revision. You can't provide your students with all the skills they will ever need as academic writers. You will best serve your students by crafting specific feedback that is sensitive to their individual abilities and needs at given stages of their development as writers.

Answer students' questions.   Perhaps the most important purpose of teacher response is to provide students with answers to their own questions. Students can suggest questions about their work in cover letters or reflection journals. You also may be able to gather student questions by looking through drafts where changes are tracked electronically or editing is marked by hand. When students start the conversation and let you know when or where they would most appreciate your advice, they will be interested in and better able to apply your feedback.

Providing useful feedback

As you read over your students' drafts, keep in mind that each response is a chance for you to teach and for your students to learn. It isn't your responsibility (and some would say not your right) to copyedit a student's draft. Limit your responses to carefully chosen chunks of information that the student can digest and advice that the student will have an opportunity to follow. The following suggestions can help you focus your responses effectively.

Comment on the rhetorical situation—not just on form.   To help your students become better communicators, try to vary the focus of your feedback. Resist the temptation to focus in early drafts on errors in form, such as grammatical mistakes and formatting flaws, though many students need help with these issues. First address global issues such as content, organization, and the general clarity of ideas. The following questions can help you assess global issues in your students' papers.

Addressing global issues

- Does the content meet the general requirements or scope of the assignment?

- Does the thesis or argument suit the nature of the assignment?

- Does the paper provide sufficient detail to support the thesis?

- Is the organization logical? Does the organizational pattern advance the writer's purpose and thesis?

Offer direction and praise on a few key points.   Students benefit from feedback in manageable portions that they can apply soon after they receive your comments. When providing focused direction for your students, try to praise one or two specific features of the paper and identify one or two specific areas in need of improvement. You can do this by hand or electronically with notes in the margins or at the end of the paper.

Positive comments are particularly important because they can affirm students' efforts to establish their voices as writers. Affirmation builds students' confidence and their ability to recognize strengths in their own work and that of their peers, and it guides students to use similar successful patterns in comparable writing situations. Comments that suggest revisions make students aware that they need to try different strategies in the future if they wish to communicate clearly and effectively. The following sample comments are useful models for identifying strengths as well as areas in need of improvement.

Sample comments

Sample comments on strengths

- Your introduction is strong because you present readers with a clear debate and include a thesis that anchors the rest of the essay.

- Your thesis statement works well. It responds clearly and effectively to the assignment.

- You include excellent details in your paper. Your description of the shooting accident in the third paragraph vividly supports your main idea about gun control.

Sample comments on areas in need of improvement

- Your second body paragraph would be stronger if you added a specific example of the misunderstandings between the two characters.

- Your argument begins strong but doesn't seem fully developed. To make your argument more convincing, try adding a third supporting point.

- You repeat the same information in these three sentences. Focus your reader's attention by omitting the first two.

Avoid vague language and jargon. Comments that are either vague or too technically detailed can thwart your efforts to help your students learn and may even frustrate students because, quite simply, they will not understand what you are trying to teach them. Try to avoid using vague generalities (such as *good work*) and jargon or cryptic abbreviations (such as *awk*). If you decide to use codes or abbreviations, be sure to define them for your students. When responding to student writing, provide your students with specific praise or concrete suggestions for improvement.

Think of yourself as part of the writer's audience, rather than the grader. Many students enter writing classes with the preconception that they will "receive" good grades if their instructor "likes" their work. To them, instructor comments often seem to reflect arbitrary opinions instead of the observations of a trained reader. Try to build students' rhetorical awareness by writing comments from a typical reader's perspective rather than a purely personal standpoint.

Compare the two sets of comments in the box on positioning yourself as a reader. Each set attempts to provide the same advice from a different perspective. The first two comments, written in first person, may lead students to think that they are writing for one person only—you—and may dissuade them from transferring lessons to other writing situations. The second two comments, written in a more general voice, can build audience awareness because they remind students to write for a community of readers.

Positioning yourself as a reader rather than as a grader

Avoid comments that limit students' audience awareness.

- Next time, I'd like to see more specific details from the source text.
- I liked your conclusion. It left me with a sense of urgency about the problem of global climate change.

Use comments that expand students' audience awareness.

- Next time try to include more specific details from the source text so that readers will be more convinced by your argument.
- Your conclusion is strong because you leave readers with a sense of urgency about the problem of global climate change.

When correcting surface errors, begin with those that most interfere with communication. Sometimes you may be able to comment on all of your students' errors because your students already have solid control over standard written English and make only a few mistakes. With many students, however, marking all the errors is not the best way to offer help. When you are working with less experienced students, avoid peppering their papers with your comments. Doing so leaves little time for other class preparation and often discourages students, who may feel overwhelmed by the number of comments they must address. Instead, focus on only those errors—or patterns of error—that interfere with the writer's communication. If you feel the need to let students know that their papers require significant editing, point out this fact in an end comment rather than through a legion of marks.

Establish goals for the next draft or assignment.   In your concluding comments, present one or two realistic targets that are based on the specific feedback you've provided throughout the paper. For example, if you have suggested that the essay would have been stronger with more details, advise the student to focus on developing supporting points in the next assignment. If the sentences are missing commas after introductory elements, require the student to edit the next paper specifically for this error. Ask students to evaluate their own progress toward these goals in a cover letter accompanying future assignments.

See the sample cover letter under "Encouraging students to reflect on their own work" in this topic.

Managing the paper load

Marking papers is a time-consuming process. Even though evaluating student writing will never be as quick and easy as sending bubbled forms through a Scantron, the following strategies can help you provide thoughtful, constructive feedback in a relatively short time.

Limit the amount of marking you do.   Be selective when you comment on student papers. Your role as an instructor and a coach is not to edit your students' work but to provide useful feedback that will encourage their growth. *Resist the urge to copyedit.*

- **Do an initial reading without a pen in your hand.** Before you begin marking, read through the paper once. Try to identify patterns or major features that warrant advice. Then read the paper a second time, limiting your comments to advice about those features that you identified the first time through.

- **Identify patterns of error—not all errors.** If a paper contains frequent errors of the same type, don't feel pressured to point out each occurrence. The number of marks may overwhelm both you and the student and may, in the end, thwart your effort to help the student improve sentence-level control. Instead, identify one or two examples of the most prominent errors and allow the student to find the remaining errors of the same type. Such a practice will save you time and will provide the student with a valuable skill-building exercise. If some students resist this method and look to you to correct all errors for them, explain your process and help them understand that they will learn best if they focus on a limited number of grammatical forms at one time and make their own revisions.

- **Mark errors with the symbols or rule labels used in the handbook.** The rules and patterns explained in Hacker handbooks are accompanied by letter-number codes: for example, the rule "Balance parallel ideas in a series" is S1-a in *A Writer's Reference* and 9a in *Rules for Writers*. To make error identification simple and direct, point to specific handbook rules in your comments. You can key your marks in several ways: (1) identify the error with the letter-number code of the relevant handbook section, (2) use the standard revision symbols in the chart at the end of the handbook, or (3) provide students with a key that matches sections of the handbook to your own revision symbols. (See the box "Keying editing symbols to the handbook.") Whichever method you choose, be sure to alert students to the key you are using so that they can interpret the codes. Give students some time to look over your feedback in class and to ask questions about your shorthand.

Keying editing symbols to the handbook

Using letter-number codes from the handbook

The code 32-b, written above the error, points the student to the rule "Use a comma after an introductory clause or phrase."

Even though Paulson's article provides an interesting perspective it fails $\overset{\text{32-b}}{}$

to address solutions to the problem.

Using revision symbols*

The shorthand symbol *frag* lets the student know that the sentence is a fragment in need of revision.

frag   Which the researcher should have used first.

*If you use symbols, be sure to point students to the list of revision symbols at the end of the handbook, or provide students with your own key.

Work with rubrics.   Rubrics are scoring instruments that match assignment requirements with descriptions of various levels of achievement and help establish benchmarks for your course. Holistic rubrics provide broad, general descriptions for each score or grade category. Analytical rubrics provide descriptions of particular features (such as purpose, content, organization, and sentence-level clarity) at each score or grade category, as shown in the box "Sample analytical rubric." The explanations in the rubric help clarify and create shortcuts for written feedback on student work. The best rubrics are specific to particular writing situations.

Sample analytical rubric

Feature	Excellent	Fair	Needs Improvement
Thesis/main idea	Focused, compelling, and sophisticated; provides specific direction for the reader	Focused; provides sufficient direction for the reader	Provides very little or no direction for the reader
Content and support used	Consistent use of relevant, specific examples and details from the text to create a compelling essay	Some use of relevant, specific examples and details from the text to create a compelling essay	Consistently vague or general use of examples from the text

→

Organization	Excellent use of paragraphs in a logical order; effective use of transitions between paragraphs and ideas	Good use of paragraphs; transitions between paragraphs and ideas may be weak; no ideas out of place	Random use of paragraphs to chunk ideas together; ideas may be out of place
Written expression	Lively, sophisticated language and sentence structures	Clear language with good control over sentence boundaries and variety	Unclear language choices; needs significant sentence-level revision

Ask students to determine areas for feedback.   In a cover letter accompanying their final drafts, students can identify one or two key features that they would like you to assess. You can provide more extensive written commentary on these features while using the rubric criteria to give students feedback on other features of the assignment.

Hold student conferences.   An inexperienced writer may need more assistance than you can reasonably provide in written comments. Rather than making copious remarks on the student's paper, meet with him or her during your office hours to discuss the assignment.

Meeting with each of your students for individual conferences during regularly scheduled class time can sometimes be the best use of your time and theirs. These conference periods can serve a variety of goals: You can identify repetitive surface-level errors, check for the basic requirements of the assignment, or help the student sort out the organization of the paper. If your class is new to research writing, you can spend a few minutes with each student discussing how to integrate sources. Require students to take notes during these meetings, and briefly check their comprehension by asking them to summarize the discussion for you at the end of the session. These measures help students feel prepared to write effective essays and can shorten the time you spend commenting on final drafts.

Use a portfolio system.   Not every draft or essay students write needs to be formally graded. You can assign several essays and ask students to submit them in portfolios, collections of student-chosen writing samples. Portfolios provide students the opportunity to evaluate their own writing and to submit for assessment the pieces that they feel reflect their strongest work.

Although this system may vary depending on the course and your department's or school's requirements, most portfolio-keeping methods follow similar guidelines: The instructor asks students to collect all of their work (prewriting notes, early drafts, revisions, and final drafts) in a folder or binder. At established points during the term (at the midpoint and the end of the semester, for example), the instructor requires students to select a few of their best pieces, revise them, and turn them in for assessment. The instructor can then formally assess—with a rubric and written

comments — the pieces that students have identified as their best work. The entire portfolio may receive a holistic grade based on the number and general quality of the entries, but the instructor does not need to comment on each piece of writing in the portfolio.

Encouraging students to reflect on their own work

All the time and energy you spend responding to student papers will not benefit students unless they themselves participate in the review and revision of their work. To encourage their investment in their writing and the feedback process, involve your students in activities that train them to evaluate their own work both during and after the writing process.

Provide checkpoints within the writing process.   In-class writing workshops and student self-assessments can help students learn to revise and identify errors *before* they submit their papers. These intermediate steps allow students to reflect on their writing process and submit their best work.

See the workshop ideas under "Striking a balance between global and local issues" in Topic 1.

- **In-class writing workshops.** After students have written preliminary drafts, conduct an in-class writing workshop during which students can evaluate their own work and others'. Workshops are often most productive when you structure each session with specific steps or points for review rather than merely asking students to exchange papers and comment on what they see. For instance, you might guide students through a structured self-assessment (see the next bullet point). You might also model the revision process with a sample paper while students check for the same features or flaws in their own work. (Annotated sample student papers are available on your handbook's Web site.) To maximize their opportunity for reflection and application, let students do most of the talking. Allow them to critique the sample piece, read their own work aloud, and offer advice to other students in the class.

- **Structured self-assessments.** Less experienced writers often benefit from structured self-assessments that guide them to check each key feature of their drafts. These self-assessments can be presented as checklists with simple yes/no questions (*Does your essay introduce the source text in the first paragraph? Does your paper include a works cited page?*) or as lists of simple directives with questions (*Underline your thesis statement. Does it respond to the assignment prompt?*). You can walk students through a structured self-assessment during a workshop session, or you can require students to attach assessment forms to interim or final drafts.

Provide students with opportunities to reflect after they complete their final drafts.   Activities that encourage students to reflect on finished assignments establish a sense of continuity in the course and, more important, stress to students that each assignment is an opportunity to learn and grow. You can create activities that will focus on both sentence-level and rhetorical issues.

- **Editing journals.** To help students reflect on and learn from the surface-level errors in their papers, require them to keep editing journals throughout the semester. In these journals, students can copy flawed sentences from their writing and then correct the sentences by applying a principle from the handbook. (See the sample editing journal entry.) This activity helps students become better editors of their own work as well as learn to use the handbook on their own.

> **Sample editing journal entry**
> Original sentence:
>
> Sedaris thinks that the things he did in his childhood was worthless
> compared to the things his friends was able to do.
>
> Edited sentence:
>
> Sedaris thinks that the things he did in his childhood <u>were</u>
> worthless compared to the things his friends <u>were</u> able to do.
>
> Rule applied:
>
> 21a: Make subjects and verbs agree.

- **Reflective self-assessments and cover letters.** To encourage students to think about rhetorical issues and the overall effectiveness of their work, ask them to complete open-ended, reflective self-assessments. Reflective self-assessments often work best when they are assigned at the end of the writing process (as cover letters submitted with final drafts) or after several assignments have been completed (as cover letters on portfolios of work). In these self-assessments, students can reflect on the revision process, express triumphs and frustrations, identify the specific areas with which they would like help, and establish goals for future assignments. See the sample cover letter on page 34.

Sample cover letter

Directions from the instructor: Insert a page break at the top of your final draft. On the blank page, type a brief cover letter to me that describes how you feel about this paper. Describe (1) what you think the strengths of this paper are, (2) which parts troubled you most and why, (3) why you did or did not incorporate your peer reviewers' suggestions, and (4) which parts or features of your essay you would like me to focus on in my assessment comments.

Student cover letter

Dear Professor Moore,

I think the strongest part of my paper is the introduction. I worked hard to think of a creative opening, and I like how it turned out. I also think that the thesis statement asserts my position clearly. I felt pretty confident when I was analyzing the advertisement, and I think my thesis does a good job of stating what the company's message is.

I like thinking about images and their messages, so I didn't have too much trouble with this assignment overall. I did have some trouble with the organization of my main points, though. I wasn't sure whether I should start with my analysis of the colors used in the ad or whether I should start with the paragraph about the image of the globe. My peer reviewers seemed to think that it was OK as is, so I left it in the original order.

The peer reviews were helpful. They gave me good advice about the page format and works cited list, which I have fixed for the final draft. One reviewer thought I should change the hook in my intro, but the other reviewers thought it was strong. Since these reviewers liked it and I did too, I decided to keep it. You can let me know if you disagree.

Again, I feel that I did a pretty good job on this assignment, so I don't have too many questions. I would like you to comment on the organization and let me know if you think the essay would be stronger if the points were switched around. I'd also like to know how I could improve the conclusion. I don't think the conclusion was as effective as the introduction, and I wish I could have made it better. I'd appreciate your suggestions. Thank you for taking the time to review my paper.

Sincerely,

Oscar Salamon

Topic 4
Working with multilingual writers (Teaching ESL)

Multilingual writers are enrolling in colleges across the United States in higher numbers than ever. While the increase in diversity will undoubtedly bring a welcome richness to your classroom, it may also pose instructional challenges that you may not feel prepared to handle.

As you work with multilingual writers, keep in mind that the skills they are learning take time and focus to build. Although there are few quick fixes, the advice in this topic can help you begin to address the needs of these students in your classroom.

Understanding your students' linguistic and educational backgrounds

Important to the advice in this topic is the distinction between *fluency*, or the natural use of language with appropriate levels of formality, and *accuracy*, or grammatical control over language. Some students may be highly fluent users of English with low levels of grammatical accuracy, and some students may produce technically accurate forms that sound mechanical or contextually inappropriate. Each student, depending on educational experience and linguistic exposure, will fall at a different place along the fluency and accuracy spectrums.

When you help individual students create a plan for improvement, consider these starting points and all the variables that contribute to the students' learning needs. Conduct an informal needs assessment by finding answers to questions, like the ones that follow, about your students' linguistic and educational backgrounds. You can often discover the answers by holding brief, casual conferences with your students. Asking them what they like or don't like to read in their native language can lead to important clues about their native-language literacy levels. Or you can ask them to write about their educational experiences in the diagnostic essays you assign at the beginning of the term.

What cultural and educational contexts are most familiar to my students?
Knowing your students' experiences with various educational contexts will help you predict the types of coaching they will need throughout the term. Some students have

spent many years in the US educational system. These students will probably be very familiar with the types of tasks you will assign and the classroom behaviors you will expect. They may be aware of typical expectations for collaborative activities, such as class discussions and peer reviews, and they may already be familiar with some academic genres, such as argument essays.

Students who are new to the US educational system, however, may need extra assistance in understanding expectations for classroom behavior and academic genres. The writing styles they prefer may seem ornate, illogical, or mechanical to you, and they may not be comfortable with actively engaging in discussion or group work. These students may need structured guidance for practices that other students have already internalized.

How did my students initially learn English—aurally or through formal English as a foreign language (EFL) education?   Your students' original exposure to English will affect the types of rhetorical and grammatical patterns they initially produce in college writing assignments. Students who learned English primarily through conversation (whether through casual contact or secondary-level English immersion programs) often have a solid sense of style, idiom, and cadence, but they may make local errors, particularly with subtle word endings and sounds (confusing *being* and *been* or leaving off the final *-d* in a past participle or past-tense verb, for example). Typically, these students will benefit most from literacy activities that help them connect the patterns they have heard with the written forms they will be expected to produce.

Some ideas for promoting sentence-level accuracy are described in Module 7 and under "Addressing surface-level writing issues" in this topic.

Students who learned English as a foreign language in a traditional classroom setting often need fluency practice, or help learning what "sounds right" in an academic context. These students often enter college writing classes with rule-based grammatical knowledge, but they may have trouble with more contextual aspects of language: semantic boundaries (understanding the meaning of *tall* versus the meaning of *high*, for example), levels of formality, and rhetorical expectations. These writers tend to benefit less from decontextualized exercise sets and more from activities involving authentic material in context. Such activities help them learn not just how to form a particular linguistic pattern but also when and how to use it appropriately.

See "Building fluency and rhetorical awareness" and "Addressing surface-level writing issues" in this topic for activities that provide fluency practice. See also Module 7.

What are my students' native-language literacy levels?   Learning about your students' native-language literacy levels can give you a sense of how quickly your students will be able to respond to writing instruction. Students who are highly literate in their native languages may enter your class with metalinguistic awareness—an understanding of how language works—and they often develop their English writing skills at a rapid pace. Students who don't have strong native-language skills may need extra time to develop as writers because they are building two skills—both English fluency and literacy in general—at once. For students in the second group, try creating activities that will build reading skills, even if your class focus is on writing. Remind these students to be patient with their own progress and to seek additional support, if possible, at your school's reading and writing labs.

How much time do my students spend speaking and hearing English every day?   The answer to this question, like the answer to the previous one, lets you and your students know how quickly they might build English fluency. Some students may use English in class, at work, and at home with their siblings, spouses,

or roommates. Others may listen to English only at school and may spend the rest of their time using their native languages. Naturally, the more exposure students have to comprehensible, contextualized language, the more opportunities they will have to build fluency. Remind students that their growth as writers depends on their exposure to English in all of its forms—both written and spoken—in contexts of varying levels of formality.

Promoting open classroom communication and helping students understand academic expectations

Throughout the semester, you may need to define expectations that your native English-speaking students take for granted. This is especially true if you are working with international students who have not been exposed to the academic culture of the United States or if you are working with first-generation college students. Open, friendly, and consistent communication can build the trust that is critical to the growth of these students.

Be as clear as possible with all of your students; provide models and explicit instructions. Being direct and open with students from the start can help develop appropriate classroom behaviors and can avoid miscommunication and frustration. Try not to assume that your students "should know better." Realize that some students may need instructions for classroom behaviors and procedures, such as speaking in class or working in groups, or basic formatting principles, for example where to staple a document or place their names on assignments. Provide key guidelines in writing and discuss them with the class. Be explicit when encouraging students to ask for clarification outside of class as well. For some students, contacting an instructor may seem inappropriate.

As you cover some of the model papers in your handbook or reader, be sure to point out rhetorical forms as well as formatting tips that may help your students understand your expectations. In addition, help ease the transition to the US classroom by pointing students to the ESL coverage in your handbook, which provides both linguistic and general academic help. Your handbook may include a directory of ESL boxes in the ESL menu near the end. You might also refer to section E1, "Understanding college-level expectations," in *Resources for Multilingual Writers and ESL*, a Hacker Handbooks Supplement.

Invite students to your office for conferences. If your course context and schedule allow, leave time for extra office hours to meet with those multilingual students who would benefit from one-on-one attention. Extend an invitation to stop by for individual help, which you may not have time to provide during class.

Students may assume that they are disturbing your work or that they are inconveniencing you if they contact you or visit during your office hours. International students from some cultures will not come to your office unless you take the initiative to set an appointment with them. To make students comfortable with seeking individual help, clarify your policies at the beginning of the term, and point them to the guidelines offered in section E1-e of *Resources for Multilingual Writers and ESL*.

Building fluency and rhetorical awareness

Students who write with language that seems stilted, mechanical, or illogical often just need more exposure to English. Many of these students can progress if they are given multiple models and repeated contact with standard linguistic and rhetorical patterns. To help students build fluency and rhetorical awareness, you might need to offer activities beyond the exercise sets in your handbook. The following classroom practices can help.

Engage all four linguistic modalities—even in classes designed to focus only on writing.   Create opportunities in class for your students to *listen*, *speak*, *read*, and *write* in English. Try reading aloud to your students, guiding them through a choral reading (of a poem, for instance) or assigning dictation or text-reconstruction activities in addition to the customary reading and writing tasks.

If possible, increase your students' exposure to English by assigning tasks that will allow them to use the language outside of the classroom. For example, you might ask students to attend a talk on campus or see a play at a local theater to help them build receptive language skills.

Offer "extensive" reading and writing practice.   "Intensive" practice focuses on grammar exercises and finely edited essays. "Extensive" practice typically favors *quantity* over precision and provides multilingual students much-needed repetition with high-frequency forms. Extensive practice helps students work on general comprehension and fluency—the ability to understand and use English without translating from their native languages (the source of many transfer errors). As you design your syllabus, try to build in some extensive activities, such as keeping a journal or reading the newspaper, that allow students to strengthen their skills.

For a list of extensive language activities, see the chart in section E2 in Resources for Multilingual Writers and ESL.

Assign practice writing that will not be graded.   You might ask students to write responses to the discussion questions at the end of a textbook reading. If the reading addresses the subject of a formal essay they will write later in the term, such ungraded assignments give students the chance to grapple with the vocabulary and rhetorical patterns they will need to know when they write for a grade.

Create opportunities for self-assessment and reflection.   To lead students toward mastery of particular concepts or rhetorical patterns, build writing assignments in multiple steps that require reflection. For example, provide checklists for students to use at various stages of the writing process, assign editing logs, ask students to keep journals about their writing experiences, or ask them to submit final drafts with cover letters in which they reflect on the strengths of their papers and the challenges they faced while writing. Such reflection activities will both reinforce class topics and help students build confidence as writers.

Addressing surface-level writing issues

Assigning intensive practice—having students complete exercises and identify and correct errors in their own writing—is a good starting point for helping students address surface-level issues. But most multilingual writers will need additional

practice to become effective editors. Offer print or electronic exercises that require students to fill in the blank or edit problem sentences as a first step toward mastering grammatical patterns. These exercises can help your students begin to recognize errors in other writers' work and to become comfortable with some of the grammatical terminology you use in class. Such exercises, however, should not be presented as a sole remedy or a quick fix. Once students become more comfortable with the grammatical patterns they encounter in the exercises, create opportunities for them to extend the practice to their own writing. This section presents a few strategies you can use to heighten your students' awareness of and control over English linguistic patterns.

Create awareness-raising activities.   Draw students' attention to specific language patterns with activities, such as those listed below, that focus on building linguistic awareness and receptive knowledge or on listening and reading comprehension.

- **Self-editing with attention to specific forms.** After students have completed rough drafts of an essay assignment, guide them through a self-editing exercise. With the handbook open for guidance, students can, for example, underline the subject and the verb in each sentence in their draft to check for agreement or underline every noun to determine the type of article needed.

- **Short writing assignments that require students to focus on specific linguistic forms.** You can design writing assignments that require students to practice specific grammatical patterns. For example, the prompt "Describe how you have changed since you enrolled in college" requires students to practice the use of the present perfect tense. Several similar prompts are listed in section E4-b in *Resources for Multilingual Writers and ESL*.

- **Editing logs.** For students who continue to make numerous surface-level errors, you can assign editing logs. Rather than correcting mistakes on students' essays, identify errors by highlighting or underlining them. Later, ask students to submit a log with copies of these original sentences along with corrections and explanations of the rule used to fix the sentence.

  For editing log lesson ideas and a blank log, see Module 7.

- **Dictation and text-reconstruction activities.** Another way to focus on specific forms is through traditional or modified dictation. Try replacing all the prepositions in a short passage with blank lines. Read the passage at a conversational pace, and ask students to fill in the blanks with the prepositions they hear. When the students are finished, reveal the original passage, and follow up with a discussion. Ask students to identify what was new or unexpected and to share what they learned about their own linguistic patterns. Discuss forms that were difficult to discern as well as tips for remembering specific patterns. Noticing patterns of error is the first step in self-editing.

Provide direct feedback; try not to ask what "sounds right."   When working with native English speakers, instructors often ask their students to read their own work aloud so that the students can hear their errors. This strategy typically does not work for multilingual writers. What "sounds right" to many of these students is often the source of the problem since they may not notice subtle sounds (such as *a* and *-ed*). When offering feedback to multilingual writers, provide explicit models, including sample sentence revisions, if appropriate, and encourage them to use their handbook for reference as they edit their papers. To provide focused assistance in a conference or on paper, key editing symbols to sections of the handbook.

For more on keying feedback to the handbook, see Topic 3.

Enlisting the help of other campus services

Some multilingual writers will have needs that you simply will not have time to address during class meetings and occasional office visits. If a student needs more assistance or coaching than you can reasonably offer, solicit help from the support offices on your campus.

Become familiar with the resources at your school's writing lab. Some students will need one-on-one coaching to see a measurable improvement in their writing skills during one semester. Encourage or require these students to use the writing lab on your campus during each step of the writing process. Familiarize yourself with the lab's location, resources, and procedures so that you can provide the students with specific instructions for making the most of their visits.

Maintain an open line of communication with your school's international or multicultural student services office. Many schools have special support offices with advising, counseling, and tutoring for international and multicultural students. Take advantage of the services at your school. With just a phone call, you might be able to arrange language tutoring or special advising for your students.

Be aware of signs of learning disabilities. Not all linguistic concerns stem from second-language learning. Be alert for statements such as "I cannot focus," "I can't spell in my native language either," or "I have trouble organizing an essay in my native language, too." If you suspect that a student has a learning disability, seek assistance from your school's disabilities service office.

Topic 5
Addressing writing in the disciplines

by Terry Myers Zawacki

Most students in first-year composition have had little experience meeting expectations that reflect the disciplines in which their teachers have been trained. The advice in this topic, beginning with a discussion of some of the key terms associated with writing in the disciplines, is aimed at helping you prepare students for the complex writing and rhetorical tasks they will encounter in courses across the curriculum.

Understanding key terms and concepts related to writing in the disciplines

When preparing students for the writing assignments they will encounter in courses across the curriculum, it is useful to understand some of the key terms and concepts associated with writing in the disciplines, or WID, as this field of study is often abbreviated. A more nuanced understanding of WID will, in turn, help you explain to students the complexity and value of the wide range of writing and rhetorical tasks they will undertake in your course and throughout their college careers.

The term *discipline* itself is interesting to consider. While members of a discipline generally agree about core methods, genres, and preferred textual conventions, disciplines are not bound by set rules for building and writing about knowledge. Rather they can expand and change in response to new questions, methods, and social concerns.

Instructors preparing their students for assignments in various disciplines will need to address genres. Genres are much more than rigid formats into which writers pour content. Genre conventions, including rhetorical purposes, formats, and textual features such as structure and tone, differ greatly depending on the aims and motives of the discourse community — the users of particular genres of writing — and the writer's own purpose and audience. For example, a book review in an environmental

science or environmental policy course might emphasize the argument the book is making related to science, whereas a book review for a literature course might focus on the author's theme, plot structure, character development, and other literary devices.

For students, learning to write in their chosen discipline occurs gradually over their undergraduate career. With practice, they learn the genres typical of the discipline and the discursive conventions — the approach, tone, structure, and style of writing appropriate for the occasion and the audience. But if students learn all of this through practice in discipline-specific courses, what can the assignments you build for one course teach them about writing in the disciplines?

Instead of teaching students rules and formats for their writing, you can help them become rhetorically aware and attentive to textual features that characterize different ways of knowing and writing in the humanities, social and natural sciences, and applied and technological disciplines such as business and engineering. These textual features include conventions for the structure of the writing (for example, organization and flow); conventions for content, such as typical thesis statements, evidence, methods, and documentation styles of the discipline; and conventions related to tone and language, including how to introduce and refer to sources, when to quote and when to paraphrase, whether to use headings and subheadings, and preferences for paragraph and sentence styles and descriptive language. (For a detailed discussion of these textual differences, see the article by Linton, Madigan, and Johnson in the list of suggested readings at the end of this topic.)

Addressing challenges related to teaching students to write in the disciplines

Because students are usually unfamiliar with the audiences and purposes assumed by their assignments in various disciplines, they may have trouble understanding the genres, conventions, and prose styles their teachers expect. Some students may lose confidence in themselves as writers. They may also become frustrated when they find that assignments of the same genre (a memo or review, for example) may be evaluated by different standards, depending on the discipline and the particular course. If students feel that the wide range of expectations they encounter when writing in various disciplines is arbitrary, they may resist your writing advice or fail to see how your assignments help prepare them for writing in other courses.

Further complicating your task are the "rules" students may have learned for generic academic writing and the attitudes of teachers who believe, sometimes along with the students, that writing should be learned "once and for all" in a composition course. Specifically, students may have trouble breaking away from some of the following:

- organizational templates, like the five-paragraph essay
- formulaic introductions, in which the thesis is only one sentence and must always appear at the end of the first paragraph
- formulaic conclusions that provide no more than a summary
- restrictions on the use of *I* in academic writing
- MLA as the preferred documentation style for the generic "research paper"

When these rules prove to be insufficient or inappropriate for the disciplinary context, students may resign themselves to the idea that teachers are all so different in their expectations that it's hard to predict what they want. (See, for example, the student attitudes reported in Thaiss and Zawacki's *Engaged Writers and Dynamic Disciplines: Reports on the Academic Writing Life*. Full publication information and a list of other readings appear on p. 48.)

One way to help students overcome these challenges is to engage them as active participants in an exploration of academic writing across the curriculum. Help them think about what teachers are expecting them to be able to do as writers and why. Provide students with opportunities to reflect on the rhetorical knowledge they already possess: What do they already know about teachers' expectations and the contexts for those expectations? How will the writing skills they've learned in one context serve them in another?

Helping students become rhetorically aware writers

Invite students to reflect on already acquired rhetorical knowledge. Active learning and reflection on learning are critical components in the transfer of knowledge from one context to another. Begin by inviting students to reflect on the rhetorical knowledge, skills, and abilities they have already acquired from previous writing experiences. Even students fresh out of high school should be able to draw on writing assignments they've completed for a variety of courses across the curriculum.

Here are some questions you might ask them to guide their self-reflection:

- What kinds of writing assignments have you been asked to do in courses across the curriculum? Which ones were most enjoyable? Why? Which were least enjoyable? Why?

- What assignments have you written with the most confidence? Why did you feel confident about them? Which ones have made you feel less than confident about your writing? Why did you feel unsure?

- How would you describe the characteristics of academic writing, as teachers have taught it or described it to you?

- What are some of the biggest differences you've noticed in the assignments teachers give and the expectations they seem to have? How would you explain these differences?

- What strategies do you use to analyze new or unfamiliar academic writing tasks and audiences?

- What writing skills do you rely on to accomplish your goals, no matter what the task?

- Have you noticed differences in the advice teachers give you regarding format, tone, and style? For example, what have various teachers told you about using *I* and contractions in your writing? Have you learned a variety of approaches toward introductions, thesis statements, and conclusions? Have teachers differed on recommended paragraph and sentence lengths?

- Do any of the differences in writing advice you've been given seem clearly related to the subject being taught? Explain.

Students will likely benefit from sharing their insights and discoveries with their peers. Explaining their experiences gives them the opportunity to analyze their own responses and expand their understanding by finding connections between their self-reflection and what they hear from their peers.

You may want to model this reflective process for your students before they begin. Think about your own academic writing experiences and how you learned to write with confidence in a variety of genres and for readers who may have had very different expectations of your writing. Students will also benefit from hearing about how you learned to become a confident writer and writing teacher.

Here are some questions to guide your own self-reflection:

- What kinds of texts do I routinely write as a scholar and a teacher? Which ones do I enjoy the most? Why?

- What writing skills do I rely on to accomplish my goals, no matter what the task?

- What strategies do I use to analyze unfamiliar writing tasks and audiences?

- How do I define academic writing based on the writing I typically do? How does my definition change when I write for different audiences and purposes?

- When it comes to stylistic conventions, is my academic writing usually formal (for example, not using *I* or contractions) or informal? How do I typically write introductions and conclusions? How do I phrase a thesis? Do my paragraphs tend to be relatively short (no more than five sentences) or longer than five sentences? Do I tend to write longer, more complex sentences, or do I prefer shorter, more concise sentences?

- To what extent and in what ways might my preferences be typical of the preferences of teachers across disciplines? How might they reflect my own disciplinary training?

Reflection helps us better understand ourselves as learners and writers: We can identify and define problems, discern patterns in learning situations and find new ways to think about them, and become agents of our own learning. Reflection is central to our ability to transfer knowledge from one context to another.

It may be helpful to create an inventory of the rhetorical knowledge, skills, and abilities your students identify in this discussion. Record their definitions of academic writing, indicating which features cut across disciplines and which ones reflect disciplinary preferences. (Be sure to acknowledge that teachers may vary, even within the same discipline, based on their own individual preferences and local contexts.) In addition, you may want to record the writing skills, abilities, and strategies your students rely on to write papers for teachers across the curriculum. To expand their rhetorical awareness, ask students to revisit the self-reflection questions and to add to these lists throughout the semester as they become more experienced writers in other disciplines.

Ask students to analyze teachers' assignments and expectations across disciplines.   Early in the semester, ask students to engage in a collaborative exploration of teachers' assignments across disciplines, including yours. As with the self-reflection exercise, the goal of this exploration is to help them identify and draw on already acquired rhetorical and genre knowledge to analyze the writing task and respond appropriately. Remind them of the features that are common to academic writing across disciplines (reasoned analysis and claims supported by evidence) and

those that are discipline-specific (genres, use of evidence, and textual conventions for structure and style). Here are some strategies you might consider using:

- With your students, analyze one or more of your assignments. Ask students to underline key words in the assignment that help them understand the genre (for example, literacy narrative) and the purpose of the writing, the rhetorical modes (such as narration, description), and the textual features they associate with this kind of writing. Discuss with students the contexts and mix of variables that influence your assignment and expectations, including your sense of the standards for generic academic writing, the discipline and subdiscipline in which you've been trained (for example, English and composition studies), departmental guidelines, and even personal goals you may have for them as writers. Ask them to consider how the rhetorical strategies, genre conventions, and other writing skills they are practicing in your course will transfer to the assignments they are encountering in other courses.

- Ask students to analyze the descriptions of disciplinary genres and sample student papers that appear in *Writing in the Disciplines: Advice and Models*, a Hacker Handbooks Supplement. How are the genres structured? What topics and questions do they address? Which genre features seem familiar, and which are unfamiliar? Students can work in groups assigned to different disciplines to analyze how the sample student papers reflect disciplinary genres and conventions (such as formal or informal tone; style of introduction, thesis, and conclusion; use of evidence; and documentation style).

- Ask students to perform a similar analysis on a professional piece of writing for a specific discipline. Have students describe the writer's purpose and how it relates to the rhetorical strategies the writer uses (for example, narration, comparison, or classification). Ask students if they can identify conventions for structure, content, tone, and language (see "Understanding key terms and concepts related to writing in the disciplines" on p. 41 for more on these conventions). If the writer uses the first-person point of view, have students describe the purpose and effect.

- Ask students to analyze the different expectations of teachers in courses across the curriculum by collaboratively examining assignments they have been given. This analysis should address questions such as the following:

   Why am I being given this assignment?

   What kind of writing am I being asked to do?

   What key words in the assignment help me understand what my teacher expects me to do as a writer?

   How does this writing reflect the disciplinary focus of the course and the genres typical of the discipline?

   How does this assignment fit in with other activities and writing assignments in the course?

   What do I already know how to do that will help me meet the teacher's expectations?

- Ask students to generate a list of questions they can ask teachers across disciplines about the contexts for their assignments and expectations for good writing, including those that are generic to academic writing, discipline-specific, or derived from other values and goals for writers. (For a list of questions students can ask teachers about writing in their disciplines, see "Learning from your students about writing in the disciplines" on p. 47.)

Reflecting on your own assignments and expectations

When you construct an assignment, you may have an implicit understanding of what you want students to learn, though you might not always state your learning goals and expectations explicitly. Even when you do make your learning goals explicit, you might not be fully aware of the complex mix of variables that influence your expectations, including your sense of the standards for generic academic writing, the discipline and subdiscipline in which you've been trained, departmental guidelines, and even personal preferences based on your sense of what should happen in a general composition course.

The following prompts ask you to reflect on your goals for student writers, the assumptions about academic writing that these goals represent, and the influences that shape the lessons you teach and the assignments you give. These prompts can help you identify and articulate, if you haven't already done so, how the rhetorical knowledge and writing skills students are learning in your course will transfer to the writing tasks they are given in courses across the curriculum. Finally, it's always a good practice to try out an assignment yourself before giving it to students.

Ask yourself the following questions about the assignments you give:

- What do I want students to learn by doing this assignment?

- Do my assignment goals reflect my sense of generic academic skills and rhetorical practices students must learn to be successful writers, no matter what the writing task?

- Do my assignment goals reflect learning outcomes set by the institution, the department, or the composition committee?

- Do my assignment goals reflect my sense of the different genres, formats, and documentation practices students must learn to be successful writers in courses across the curriculum?

- Do my assignment goals reflect other more personal preferences and values (for example, a sense that students need practice in writing for nonacademic audiences in nonacademic genres)?

- Will the rhetorical modes (narration, description, argument) and analytical strategies (definition, comparison and contrast, cause and effect) that I'm teaching students to write be useful to them when they write in other courses? In what way? For example, will these rhetorical modes and analytical strategies be useful when students write case studies or empirical reports based on observation and description?

- How will the genres I'm teaching students to write help them when they write in other courses? How might expectations for genres such as essays, abstracts,

annotated bibliographies, book reviews, and researched reports differ from one course to the next?

- What kinds of introductions, thesis statements, and conclusions do I want my students to write? What kind of supporting evidence do I expect my students to use? How are these expectations similar to and different from those of teachers in other disciplines?

- What tone, style, format, and other academic conventions are appropriate for this assignment and this genre of writing? To what extent are they generic to academic writing across the curriculum, and to what extent are they determined by other contexts?

- What do my students need to know about the ways in which my expectations may be similar to or different from those of teachers in other courses across the curriculum?

Learning from your students about writing in the disciplines

Addressing WID in your writing course may seem daunting. How can you begin to grasp the purposes, methods, genres, textual conventions, and other expectations for so many disciplines, courses, and teachers across your institution? It's important to remember how much your students can teach you. You can learn about the kinds of writing your students will be asked to do in their majors if you engage them as active participants in an investigation of academic writing across the curriculum. Their investigation may include interviews with professors, an analysis of their assignments, an exploration of the kinds of professional writing people do in the discipline, and the books and journals their professors write for and read. You might even want to expand this exploration to workplace documents or documents produced in social settings such as organizations and clubs.

Here are some suggestions for questions students might ask a professor in their major:

- How would you describe your discipline and your particular area of interest in the discipline?

- What kinds of questions and methods are typical of your discipline? What type of evidence is most typically used?

- How important is writing in your discipline?

- In what genres do you and your colleagues typically write and for what audiences?

- Do you or your colleagues sometimes write for audiences and in genres that are not typical of your discipline?

- Do you ever use the first-person point of view when you write? If so, when is first person acceptable?

- Does everyone in your discipline follow standard conventions and documentation styles? If so, what are they? If not, what are some of the variations?

- What do you consider to be good writing in your discipline?

For further discussion of the advice and strategies discussed in this topic, see the following readings:

Beaufort, Anne. *College Writing and Beyond: A New Framework for University Writing Instruction.* Logan: Utah State UP, 2007. Print.

Carter, Michael. "Ways of Knowing, Doing, and Writing in the Disciplines." *College Composition and Communication* 58.3 (2007): 385–418. Print.

Linton, Patricia, Robert Madigan, and Susan Johnson. "Introducing Students to Disciplinary Genres: The Role of the General Composition Course." *Language and Learning across the Disciplines* 1.2 (1994): 63–78. Print.

Russell, David. "Rethinking Genre in School and Society: An Activity Theory Analysis." *Written Communication* 14.4 (1997): 504–54. Print.

Thaiss, Chris, and Terry Myers Zawacki. *Engaged Writers and Dynamic Disciplines: Research on the Academic Writing Life.* Portsmouth: Boynton, 2006. Print.

Yancey, Kathleen Blake. *Reflection in the Writing Classroom.* Logan: Utah State UP, 1998. Print.