Learning Through Writing

A Handbook for Students of College Writing 1 & 2

Writing at Queens, 2018
Queens College, CUNY

A note to students:

The ability to write with confidence, purpose, and precision is essential to the success of graduates of Queens College. The professional success and personal satisfaction of 21st-century citizens require fluency with a broad range of modes of communication. With this in mind, a Queens College education aims to enable students to take ownership of language and to develop a capacity for both critical analysis and considered reflection.

To meet these ambitious goals, the college has made a broad commitment to writing across the curriculum and in the disciplines. This reflects the reality of student learning. No student learns to write in a single course, and the development of successful writing practices takes time. The college provides students with ample opportunities to develop writing practices, strategies, and skills throughout their academic work. Starting in Fall 2013, this begins with College Writing 1 (English 110) and College Writing 2 and continues with the requirement to take two Writing-Intensive (W) courses. In addition to W courses—which must meet college guidelines in terms of the amount of writing assigned and attention to writing in class—courses throughout the curriculum, both in the General Education requirements and in the majors, have significant expectations for student writing.

This handbook collects resources that will help you become a better college writer—from understanding what is expected of you, to improving your writing through revision, to getting additional help. Part I describes expectations for college writers and Part II includes handouts and exercises that form the basis of your two College Writing courses. Your College Writing 1 and 2 instructors will often refer to these documents in class, and you will also find them valuable in completing writing assignments in future courses.

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Queens College Goals for Student Writing

The College's curriculum reflects ambitious goals for student writing intended to foster a commitment to ideas, engagement with texts, and ownership of language. The cumulative experience Queens College graduates have had by the time they complete a bachelor's degree will prepare them to:

- Become fluent with the elements of academic writing, including thesis, motive, evidence, analysis, and style
- Practice the processes and methods commonly used by effective writers
- Take ownership of the language and rhetorical strategies they employ
- Develop a working knowledge of the grammar and mechanics of standard English
- Gain experience with the conventions of various genres, disciplines, and professions

Elements of Academic Writing

Students will be able to:

- Articulate a focused argument (or line of thinking)
- Identify a genuine intellectual question or problem
- Discuss relevant evidence (including written texts, visual images, graphs and charts, and electronic media) and analyze it effectively
- Employ logical structures (paragraphs with identities, transitional language, and the progressive development of ideas)
- Engage sources critically and develop information literacy

Faculty can prepare students to hone these abilities in the following ways:

- Designing writing assignments that give students opportunities to practice particular elements of writing
- Providing students with language with which to discuss these elements at work in their writing, that of their peers, and that of professional writers
- Using course reading to model the elements at work in published writing
- Responding to student writing strategically, emphasizing elements of writing most relevant to assignments at hand or most significant in terms of each student's individual development

Processes and Methods

Students will be able to:

- Make use of pre-writing techniques: critical reading, note-taking, brainstorming, summarizing, outlining, etc.
- Develop ideas and language through a process of drafting and revision
- Conduct research and evaluate and synthesize results
- Gain an awareness of audience
- Engage in peer critique

Faculty can prepare students to hone these abilities in the following ways:

- Designing assignments so that students complete them incrementally
- Responding to student writing at key moments in the writing process
- Engaging students in peer critique
- Coordinating with the library to offer specialized library resource sessions
- Emphasizing the connection between research skills and critical thinking
- Building into course requirements opportunities for students to reflect on their own strengths and weaknesses

Style, Conventions, and Mechanics

Students will be able to:

- Write in clear, controlled prose
- Employ standard usage of English grammar and mechanics (including sentence construction, verb consistency, pronoun consistency, and appropriate syntax)
- Write in a voice appropriate to college-level inquiry in general and individual assignments in particular
- Identify audience and orient readers accordingly
- Cite sources appropriately

Faculty can prepare students to hone these abilities in the following ways:

- Providing models of strong student and/or professional writing and discussing the stylistic and rhetorical strategies that make them successful
- Creating opportunities for students to write both formally and informally and to reflect on the differences between formal and informal writing
- Identifying individual student weaknesses and giving students opportunities to practice their skills in these areas
- Offering students opportunities for revision
- Referring students to the Writing Center for tutoring

Discipline- and Profession-Specific Techniques

Students will be able to:

- Articulate ideas within disciplinary conversations or debates
- Use language appropriate to the discipline and audience
- Continue developing their information literacy as they gain experience with discipline-specific research methods, including facility with appropriate research databases

- Integrate appropriate visual, graphic, or numerical information
- Use appropriate citation conventions and styles (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.)

Faculty can prepare students to hone these abilities in the following ways:

- Providing opportunities for students to enter scholarly and professional debates, dialogues, and controversies about major issues in a given field
- Introducing students to the unique methods and contributions of their disciplines and offering models of outstanding student and professional work in the field
- Emphasizing cross-disciplinary inquiry where appropriate
- Creating opportunities for students to make their work public and interact with professionals
- Discussing models for appropriate citation and use of sources and giving students opportunities to practice citation and effective use of sources

These goals and suggestions for helping students meet them are informed by the Council of Writing Program Administrators' Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition <http://www. wpacouncil.org/positions/ outcomes.html>. They are revised and expanded to address the broader scope of a Writing Across the Curriculum program and the local values and needs of Queens College students and faculty.

These goals were endorsed by the Academic Senate in May 2007.

<http://writingatqueens.org/files/2012/07/GoalsforStudentWriting.pdf>

Queens College Writing Requirement

As of Fall 2013, the basic sequence of writing courses for all students graduating from Queens College is College Writing 1, College Writing 2, and two additional courses designated as "writing intensive" (W). Courses taken to fulfill the composition requirement may not be taken P/NC.

For transfer students, the Director of Writing at Queens shall have sole responsibility to authorize writing-intensive units for transferred courses other than ENGL 120W. At most, one writing-intensive unit will be granted for any student, but only if the institution at which the course was taken has a writing-intensive program similar to that at Queens College, and the course is specified in the institution's bulletin as writing intensive. At least one writing-intensive unit must be taken in residence at Queens College.

It is important that students pass ENGL 110 in their first year at Queens and before they begin taking advanced courses in any department of the college. A student may not drop a required English course more than once without permission from the Undergraduate Scholastic Standards Committee, and will face dismissal if continued registration is not maintained.

ENGL 110 should be completed before entrance to the upper division of the college. Students entering as freshmen should complete the requirement within the first 60 credits. Students who have completed 60 credits but have not yet passed ENGL 110 will not be allowed to register for any other courses until they have completed the basic English requirement. Similarly, students who are admitted with more than 60 credits and who have not completed the equivalent of ENGL 110, must do so within their first two semesters at Queens. Exceptions to these restrictions may be granted only by the Undergraduate Scholastic Standards Committee.

<http://www.qc.cuny.edu/Academics/Pages/CollegeBulletins.aspx>

Pathways Outcomes for College Writing 1 and College Writing 2

English Composition: Six credits

A course in this area must meet all of the following learning outcomes. A student will:

- Read and listen critically and analytically, including identifying an argument's major assumptions and assertions and evaluating its supporting evidence.

- Write clearly and coherently in varied, academic formats (such as formal essays, research papers, and reports) using standard English and appropriate technology to critique and improve one's own and others' texts.

- Demonstrate research skills using appropriate technology, including gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing primary and secondary sources.

- Support a thesis with well-reasoned arguments, and communicate persuasively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media.

- Formulate original ideas and relate them to the ideas of others by employing the conventions of ethical attribution and citation

What is a Writing-Intensive (W) Course?

Every student at Queens College must take College Writing 1 (ENG 110), College Writing 2, and two additional writing-intensive courses—known as W courses.

A writing-intensive course typically uses writing to help students develop their understanding of course materials and concepts. W courses tend to be smaller than non-W courses, so that instructors can devote time and attention to the writing and writing process of individual students. W courses also give students a chance to practice writing in ways that are particular to specific disciplines.

There are as many types of W courses as there are fields of academic study—for example, Mathematics 213W (Writing with Mathematica), Psychology 213W (Experimental Psychology), Media Studies 330W (The Music Industry), or Sociology 381W (Senior Seminar). You can expect some of the following from any W course you take:

- at least 15 pages of writing
- at least three writing assignments over the course of the semester
- attention to writing in class
- opportunity to revise your work
- attention to the writing process
- attention to the writing methods specific to the course or discipline

Which Writing-Intensive Courses Should You Take?

You should consider carefully which writing-intensive courses to take. Every student—and every writer—is different. As you make choices about the W courses you'll take, think about what you want or need to learn, what kinds of feedback you've received from teachers in the past, and what kinds of writing will help you most in your future profession and your life.

While there is no one-size-fits-all program of W courses, you should consider the following:

- It will be helpful if you take at least one W course in your major or minor (if offered) because this will introduce you to discipline-specific writing techniques that will serve you well in many of your courses.

- It's a good idea to take at least one upper-level (300-level) W course. This will give you the opportunity to explore the relationship between writing and advanced thinking in a particular field

- Choose W courses whose topics interest you. W courses involve a great deal of concentrated writing and thinking. You're likely to learn more if you're invested in the course materials and topics.

Learning Goals for College Writing 1 (English 110)

The learning objectives of each section of English 110 should reflect the goals below. Instructors may choose to represent a smaller number of these goals on a syllabus, or adapt them to suit their courses, but it is important that all instructors understand these goals as a fundamental component of the first-year writing program at Queens College.

Students who complete English 110 will be able to:

1. Develop an awareness of the craft, rhetoric, and process of writing.

2. Identify strengths and weaknesses in their writing and articulate strategies for improvement.

3. Adapt the elements of writing–including thesis, audience, motive, evidence, analysis, and structure–to a variety of writing contexts.

4. Read critically and write fluently in a variety of genres, including the following possibilities in print and digital media: argumentative essays, narrative essays, ethnographic essays, case studies, blogs, letters to the editor, or wiki pages.

5. Understand the guidelines for a variety of assignments and to respond to these guidelines with imagination and ingenuity.

6. Articulate how rhetoric and ideas work together to produce meaning.

7. Revise and edit their work effectively.

8. Demonstrate a proficiency in methods of research and documentation, including the evaluation of secondary sources, annotation, integration of quotations, and proper citation according to a discipline appropriate guideline (such as MLA, APA, or Chicago).

9. Recognize the conventions and methods of various disciplines in the liberal arts and sciences.

10. Make connections with other courses in terms of both content and methods of critical inquiry.

Guidelines for College Writing 1 (English 110)

The primary goal of English 110 is to introduce students to the writing strategies and methods of inquiry that are at the heart of a liberal arts education and the College's General Education curriculum. In English 110, students pursue questions of scholarly consequence as they build the authority they need to write their way into existing intellectual conversations.

To foster this kind of authority, English 110 puts writing at its center. In other words, it sequences assignments and class activities to teach the craft, rhetoric, and processes of writing. The program asks each instructor to create a "Course Overview" that makes this sequence evident. The overviews are designed to emphasize particular elements of writing and demonstrate how writing assignments give students practice with these elements. In addition, the overviews demonstrate how the goals that students achieve in earlier reading and writing assignments enable them to meet the requirements of later, more complex assignments.

Writing Assignments foster a conversation about the course topic with:

- At least four formal essays over the course of the semester, for a total of at least 4,000 words. However, an annotated bibliography or some other writing-intensive project may be substituted for the fourth essay.

- At least one formal research essay or project that introduces students to using and evaluating library resources. Sources should include both physical and online materials, such as CUNY+, appropriate research databases like JSTOR or EBSCOHost, and Rosenthal Library. Additionally, all 110 courses should schedule at least one meeting with a librarian.

- Pre-draft writing, drafts, and revisions of all formal writing assignments. At least one of these revisions should be done as a peer review.

- Regular, ungraded informal pieces of writing (both in class and outside).

Reading Assignments serve writing assignments, as they are selected with writing in mind and are examined from a rhetorical point of view. In addition, they should be limited to what may be discussed in class or on an electronic forum. Because of this, students in English 110 read to learn:

- Methods for active engagement with a variety of texts and genres of appropriate difficulty for college freshmen.

- Principles of excellent writing—for example, the development of a style appropriate to a particular audience, responsible use of evidence, and methods of analysis.

- The conventions of academic writing and other genres.

- How academic sources "speak" in "conversation," and how to intervene among them with authority in writing.

Every student in English 110 conducts original research and enters into a scholarly community through:

- A process of inquiry that he or she devises through the analysis of evidence.

- A clearly defined policy on academic integrity that is stated on the course syllabus.

- The academic conventions of citation, which they practice by integrating source material into their writing.

- The distinctions they draw between primary and secondary sources.

- The regular use of "The Goals for Student Writing at Queens College" and a vocabulary for discussing elements of writing, such as Gordon Harvey's "Elements of Academic Writing."

- When possible or appropriate, a digital platform that encourages formal and/or informal student writing. The digital platforms could include anything from blogs, wikis, podcasts, videos, Blackboard discussion threads, Epsilen software, social networking sites, or anything along those lines.

Resources available for students enrolled in English 110 (or any course that involves writing) include:

- Tutoring provided by the Writing Center (qcpages.qc.edu/qcwsw/), including regular one-on-one sessions, drop-in sessions, and e-tutoring.

- Writing guides and handouts available on The Writing at Queens web site (www.writingatqueens.org)

- Revisions: A Journal on Writing (http://writingatqueens.qc.cuny.edu/revisions)

- "Writing Intensive Courses: A Guide for Students" (writingatqueens.org)

- "Goals for Student Writing at Queens College" (writingatqueens.org)

English 110 website: <http://english110.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/110-guidelines/>

Goals for College Writing 2

The primary goal for College Writing 2 is to help students transfer the interdisciplinary work that they do in English 110 to write effectively with the scholarly conventions of a particular discipline. With that in mind, College Writing 2 courses will meet a number of overlapping goals from three documents:

Main Goals from Queens College Goals for Student Writing

Students will learn to:
• Become fluent with the elements of academic writing, including thesis, motive, evidence, analysis, and style
• Practice the processes and methods commonly used by effective writers
• Take ownership of the language and rhetorical strategies they employ
• Develop a working knowledge of the grammar and mechanics of standard English
• Gain experience with the conventions of various genres, disciplines, and professions

Pathways Learning Outcomes for English Composition courses

Students will learn to:
• Read and listen critically and analytically, including identifying an argument's major assumptions and assertions and evaluating its supporting evidence.
• Write clearly and coherently in varied, academic formats (such as formal essays, research papers, and reports) using standard English and appropriate technology to critique and improve one's own and others' texts.

- Demonstrate research skills using appropriate technology, including gathering, evaluating, and synthesizing primary and secondary sources.

- Support a thesis with well-reasoned arguments, and communicate persuasively across a variety of contexts, purposes, audiences, and media.
- Formulate original ideas and relate them to the ideas of others by employing the conventions of ethical attribution and citation.

Writing Intensive Course Criteria

- Syllabi must include this statement: "This course is a Writing Intensive (W) course and fulfills one Writing Intensive requirement. W classes include a significant portion of time devoted to writing instruction. This may include things such as revision workshops, discussions of rhetorical strategies, or reflective writing about writing assignments."
- At least 5000 words (15 pages) of evaluated writing in three or more assignments (either separate papers or one term paper done in stages) so that the students have the opportunity to develop and improve. At least one assignment (graded or ungraded) must require student revision in response to instructor feedback.
- At least three separate class hours (either one hour in three class sessions or shorter time periods over multiple sessions) be devoted to explicit writing instruction, including such things as peer review, revision strategies, disciplinary concerns, proper attribution, the writing process, research, rhetorical strategies, or writing in online environments.
- If exams are given, they must include essay questions.
- Maximum class-size of 25 students.

College Writing 2 website:
<http://collegewriting2.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/goals-for-college-writing-2/>
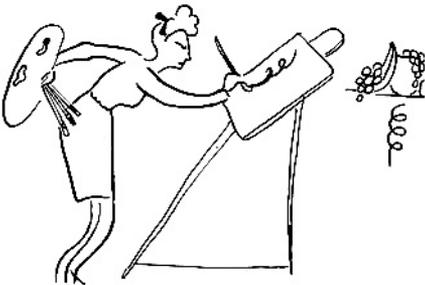
Guidelines for College Writing 2

In order to help students fulfill the goals articulated in Queens College's Goals for Student Writing and the goals mandated by the Pathways Learning Outcomes for English Composition Courses, faculty should adopt the following practices in their courses wherever possible.

- Introduce a shared vocabulary for talking about elements of writing emphasized in the course (with argument, motive, evidence, and analysis as central elements). (See Harvey's "Elements of the Academic Essay," for an example of such a vocabulary.) This vocabulary should encompass general elements of writing and those particular to the discipline in question.

- Use this vocabulary to describe the learning goals for each writing assignment.

- When possible, discuss course readings as models for the writing students are doing, with a focus on their rhetorical strategies and the elements of writing and argument (again, using the vocabulary described above).

- Design writing assignments so that students complete them in stages, starting with informal and exploratory writing and moving toward a more formal draft. (Note: In composition studies, the early, informal writing is often called "pre-draft" writing or "scaffolding.")

- Assign a significant amount of ungraded, informal writing (journals, blogs, reading responses, reflections on their own writing and the feedback they get on it). Note: Not all this writing has to be read by the instructor. Students need to write regularly in order to improve.

- Provide students with feedback on drafts–from peers and/or instructors. This feedback should use the shared vocabulary described above and be focused on the stated assignment goals.

- Provide assigned opportunities for students to reflect on their progress in writing, their strengths and weaknesses, and the feedback they're getting. (In composition studies, this is often described as "meta-cognitive" work.)

- Assign opportunities for students to revise in response to feedback.

II. SUCCEEDING AS A COLLEGE WRITER

The documents on the following pages offer ways for students to think about college writing outside of grammar and error. College Writing 1 and 2 courses aim to:

- Prepare students for college writing expectations
- Introduce students to expository strategies
- Teach the importance of revision
- Develop students' rhetorical skills and knowledge
- Help students to learn from one another

You can expect to use some or all of these documents regularly in class, but you will benefit most if you also look at them outside of class--when you're pondering an assignment, revising a draft, or looking at an instructor's feedback.

"Elements of the Academic Essay"
Gordon Harvey

1. *Thesis*: your main insight or idea about a text or topic, and the *main* proposition that your essay demonstrates. It should be true but arguable (not obviously or patently true, but one alternative among several), be limited enough in scope to be argued in a short composition and with available evidence, and get to the heart of the text or topic being analyzed (not be peripheral). It should be stated early in some form and at some point recast sharply (not just be implied), and it should govern the whole essay (not disappear in places).

2. *Motive*: the intellectual context that you establish for your topic and thesis at the start of your essay, in order to suggest why someone, besides your instructor, might want to read an essay on this topic or need to hear your particular thesis argued—why your thesis isn't just obvious to all, why other people might hold *other* theses (that you think are wrong). Your motive should be aimed at your audience: it won't necessarily be the reason you first got interested in the topic (which could be private and idiosyncratic) or the personal motivation behind your engagement with the topic. Indeed it's where you suggest that your argument *isn't* idiosyncratic, but rather is generally interesting. The motive you set up should be genuine: a misapprehension or puzzle that an intelligent reader (not a straw dummy) would really have, a point that such a reader would really overlook. Defining motive should be the main business of your introductory paragraphs, where it is usually introduced by a form of the complicating word "But."

3. *Evidence*: the data—facts, examples, or details—that you refer to, quote, or summarize to support your thesis. There needs to be *enough* evidence to be persuasive; it needs to be the right *kind* of evidence to support the thesis (with no obvious pieces of evidence overlooked); it needs to be sufficiently *concrete* for the reader to trust it (e.g. in textual analysis, it often helps to find one or two key or representative passages to quote and focus on); and if summarized, it needs to be summarized *accurately* and fairly.

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4. _Analysis_: the work of breaking down, interpreting, and commenting upon the data, of saying what can be inferred from the data such that it supports a thesis (is _evidence_ for something). Analysis is what you do with data when you go beyond observing or summarizing it: you show how its parts contribute to a whole or how causes contribute to an effect; you draw out the significance or implication not apparent to a superficial view. Analysis is what makes the writer feel present, as a reasoning individual; so your essay should do more analyzing than summarizing or quoting.

5. _Keyterms_: the recurring terms or basic oppositions that an argument rests upon, usually literal but sometimes a ruling metaphor. These terms usually imply certain **_assumptions_**—unstated beliefs about life, history, literature, reasoning, etc. that the essayist doesn't argue for but simply assumes to be true. An essay's keyterms should be clear in their meaning and appear throughout (not be abandoned half-way); they should be appropriate for the subject at hand (not unfair or too simple—a false or constraining opposition); and they should not be inert clichés or abstractions (e.g. "the evils of society"). The attendant assumptions should bear logical inspection, and if arguable they should be explicitly acknowledged.

6. _Structure_: the sequence of main sections or sub-topics, and the turning points between them. The sections should follow a logical order, and the links in that order should be apparent to the reader (see "stitching"). But it should also be a progressive order—there should have a direction of **_development_** or **_complication_**, not be simply a list or a series of restatements of the thesis ("Macbeth is ambitious: he's ambitious _here_; and he's ambitious _here_; and he's ambitions _here_, too; thus, Macbeth is ambitious"). And the order should be supple enough to allow the writer to explore the topic, not just hammer home a thesis. (If the essay is complex or long, its structure may be briefly announced or hinted at after the thesis, in a road-map or plan sentence.)

7. Stitching: words that tie together the parts of an argument, most commonly (a) by using *transition* (linking or turning) words as signposts to indicate how a new section, paragraph, or sentence follows from the one immediately previous; but also (b) by *recollection* of an earlier idea or part of the essay, referring back to it either by explicit statement or by echoing key words or resonant phrases quoted or stated earlier. The repeating of key or thesis concepts is especially helpful at points of transition from one section to another, to show how the new section fits in.

8. Sources: persons or documents, referred to, summarized, or quoted, that help a writer demonstrate the truth of his or her argument. They are typically sources of (a) factual information or data, (b) opinions or interpretation on your topic, (c) comparable versions of the thing you are discussing, or (d) applicable general concepts. Your sources need to be efficiently integrated and fairly acknowledged by citation.

9. Reflecting: when you pause in your demonstration to reflect on it, to raise or answer a question about it—as when you (1) consider a **counter-argument**—a possible objection, alternative, or problem that a skeptical or resistant reader might raise; (2) *define your terms or assumptions* (what do I mean by this term? or, what am I assuming here?); (3) handle a newly emergent concern (but if this is so, then how can X be?); (4) draw out an *implication* (so what? what might be the wider significance of the argument I have made? what might it lead to if I'm right? or, what does my argument about a single aspect of this suggest about the whole thing? or about the way people live and think?), and (5) consider a possible *explanation* for the phenomenon that has been demonstrated (why might this be so? what might cause or have caused it?); (6) offer a *qualification* or limitation to the case you have made (what you're *not* saying). The first of these reflections can come anywhere in an essay; the second usually comes early; the last four often come late (they're common moves of conclusion).

10. Orienting: bits of information, explanation, and summary that orient the reader who isn't expert in the subject, enabling such a reader to follow the argument. The orienting question is, what does my reader need here? The answer can take many forms: necessary information about the text, author,

or event (e.g. given in your introduction); a summary of a text or passage about to be analyzed; pieces of information given along the way about passages, people, or events mentioned (including announcing or "set-up" phrases for quotations and sources). The trick is to orient briefly and gracefully.

11. **Stance**: the implied relationship of you, the writer, to your readers and subject: how and where you implicitly position yourself as an analyst. Stance is defined by such features as style and tone (e.g. familiar or formal); the presence or absence of specialized language and knowledge; the amount of time spent orienting a general, non-expert reader; the use of scholarly conventions of form and style. Your stance should be established within the first few paragraphs of your essay, and it should remain consistent.

12. **Style**: the choices you make of words and sentence structure. Your style should be exact and clear (should bring out main idea and action of each sentence, not bury it) and plain without being flat (should be graceful and a little interesting, not stuffy).

13. **Title**: It should both interest and inform. To inform—i.e. inform a general reader who might be browsing in an essay collection or bibliography—your title should give the subject and focus of the essay. To interest, your title might include a linguistic twist, paradox, sound pattern, or striking phrase taken from one of your sources (the aptness of which phrase the reader comes gradually to see). You can combine the interesting and informing functions in a single title or split them into title and subtitle. The interesting element shouldn't be too cute; the informing element shouldn't go so far as to state a thesis. Don't underline your own title, except where it contains the title of another text.

"8 Strategies for Critically Engaging Sources"
Mark Gaipa

The strategies below are adapted, and the figures reproduced, from Mark Gaipa's "Breaking into the Conversation: How Students Can Acquire Authority in Their Writing," *Pedagogy* 4.3 (2004): 419-37. Note that these strategies may be used globally, as a way of framing an argument, or locally, as a way of engaging sources at a particular stage in an argument.

Strategy 1: Picking a Fight – Knock down a scholar's argument and, in the best version of this strategy, replace it with one's own.

Strategy 2: Ass Kissing, or Riding a Scholar's Coattails – Agree with a scholar to gain evidence and authority. Possibly go on to defend the scholar from attack by another scholar, thus resolving a larger controversy.

Strategy 3: Piggybacking, or Standing on the Shoulders of a Giant – Agree with a scholar (i.e., kiss ass), but then complete or extend the scholar's work, usually by borrowing an idea or concept from the scholar and developing it through application to a new subject or new part of the conversation.

Strategy 4: Leapfrogging, or Biting the Hand That Feeds You – Agree with a scholar (i.e., kiss ass), then identify and solve a problem in the scholar's work—for example, an oversight, inconsistency, or contradiction.

Strategy 5: Playing Peacemaker – Identify a conflict or dispute between two or more scholars, then resolve it using a new or more encompassing perspective.

Strategy 6: Taking on the Establishment, or Acting Paranoid – Pick a fight with everyone in a critical conversation—for example, by showing how the status quo is wrong, a critical consensus is actually unfounded, or a dispute is based on a faulty assumption.

Strategy 7: Dropping Out, or Finding Room on the Margins – Focus on an issue in the margins of the critical conversation, illuminating that issue and (in the best version of this strategy) ultimately redefining the conversation itself.
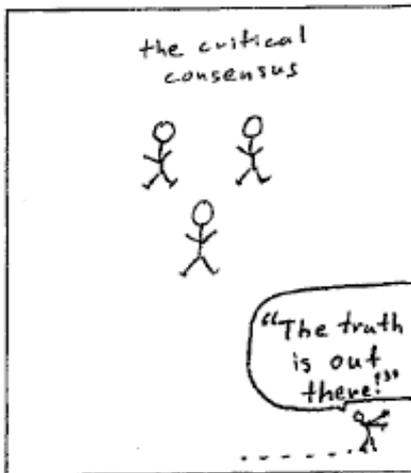
Strategy 8: Crossbreeding with Something New – Inject really new material into the critical conversation to produce a new argument. For example, bring in a theory from another discipline to reinterpret the evidence, bring in new evidence to upset an old theory or interpretation, or establish an original framework (a combination of theories, a historical understanding) to reinterpret the evidence.
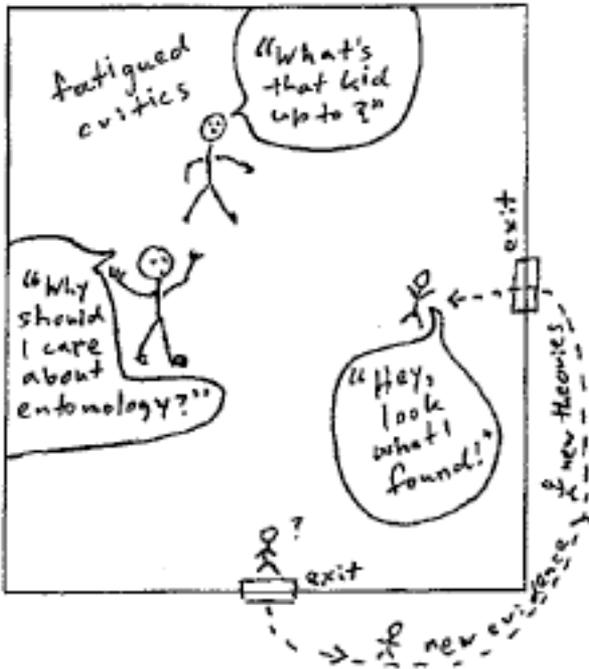
"Motivating Moves"
Kerry Walk

Match the "motivating moves" below
with writing samples from the disciplines on the next page.

Please note that each writing sample makes more than one motivating move.

Good news: There are no wrong answers!

Some Motivating Moves

1. The truth isn't what one would expect, or what it might appear to be on first reading.

2. The knowledge on the topic has heretofore been limited.

3. There's a mystery or puzzle or question here that needs answering.

4. Published views of the matter conflict.

5. We can learn about a larger phenomenon by studying this smaller one.

6. This seemingly tangential or insignificant matter is actually important or interesting.

7. There's an inconsistency, contradiction, or tension here that needs explaining.

8. The standard opinion(s) need challenging or qualifying.

Published Writing from Disciplines

Sociology: How does one explain the seeming inconsistency between the responses by the Hispanic community to the 1992 poll, on the one hand, and the general pride that most Americans express about their immigrant roots, on the other?

History: New York's American Art-Union offers an opportunity to examine, in one significant context, the struggle that defined the social role of art and artists in the antebellum North.

Environmental Science: Although the origin of these sources [of oxygenated organic compounds] is still unclear, we suggest that oxygenated species could be formed via the oxidation of hydrocarbons in the atmosphere, the photochemical degradation of organic matter in the oceans, and direct emissions from terrestrial vegetation.

Psychology (Freud, in fact!): The play is built on Hamlet's hesitations over fulfilling the task of revenge that is assigned to him; but its text offers no reasons or motivations for these hesitations, and an immense variety of attempts at interpreting them have failed to produce a result.

"Integrating Sources and Indicating Stance"
Jason Tougaw

The language you choose to introduce your sources is extremely important, because it lets readers know what you think about your sources—in other words, it conveys a great deal about your "stance" (see Gordon Harvey's "Elements of the Academic Essay") as a writer. Well-chosen verbs (other than "says," or "writes," or "states") can make your writing feel more confident and show that you are comfortable writing in conversation with sources.

Note how the following verbs imply very different meanings about the sources they might introduce. Then, read the four examples below and think about the language in them which indicates stance. Finally, read through a piece of your own writing and circle every verb you use to introduce sources. Do you notice any patterns? How might you vary your choice of verbs, to be more precise? How might they way you introduce your sources help you think about deepening your analysis of them?

Verbs commonly used to introduce sources:

acknowledges	comments	endorses	rails
adds	compares	grants	reasons
admits	confirms	illustrates	refutes
agrees	contends	implies	rejects
argues	declares	insists	reports
asserts	denies	notes	responds
believes	disputes	observes	suggests
boasts	de-emphasizes	offers	thinks
claims	emphasizes	points out	writes

What do the following introductions imply about the stance of the writer in relation to his or her material?

- In *Dreaming: An Introduction to the Science of Sleep* (2002), Harvard psychiatrist J. Allan Hobson insists that "the most scientifically useful way to define and measure dreaming [is] to focus on the formal features rather than the content" (1), but by 1900 Freud already realized that "dreams really do have a meaning and are in no sense an expression of brain-activity in a state of fragmentation" (97).

- In his classic essay, "On the Nature of Dreams," Carl Jung argues presciently that . . .

- Even an ardent advocate like La Berge admits that lucid dreaming is not "the same thing as enlightenment" (243).

- Upon a first viewing, audiences might imagine *Waking Life* offers a monumental philosophy or an explanation for ancient questions about the nature of reality, but in the words of reviewer Dave Kehr, "Mr. Linklater offers questions, not conclusions."

"Using Quotations and Making Arguments"
Kim Hensley

Although Jojo Binks posits that "students love[d] to dance around the quad naked on a regular basis" (33), university documents provide no evidence of any such behavior; in fact, the official online university charter describes students on campus as having always been "uniformly well-behaved and focused on scholastics" (Queens College). The stark difference in these two accounts of student behavior points to the probability that neither account is completely accurate. It is as unlikely that many students actually danced around the quad naked at all, much less on a regular basis, as it is that students here have always been "uniformly well-behaved." The reality is probably somewhere in between these two arguments, but for the people writing the documents, this may be both the truth as they see it and the image of university life they'd like their audience to believe.

The example above demonstrates one way (among many possible ways) to:

- (a) incorporate quotations into the writer's own sentence
- (b) have sources converse with one another
- (c) start to analyze deeply based on short quotations
- (d) pay close attention to the wording of the quotations themselves as sites to converse with the sources and contend with their accuracy (note the focus on "a regular basis" and "uniformly well-behaved")
- (e) start to analyze why a person might write something based on their intended/expected audience
- (f) change the tense of a quotation so it fits within the writer's sentence (note the "[d]" added to "love"—you can add words or changed tenses using brackets to make your sentence work with the quotation.)

Think of a different, brief, way of using these same pieces of evidence (you may quote or paraphrase) to make some argument. You could use a similar argument as the one above, but construct it in a different way or you could argue something completely different. Here's the citation and other information you have to work with (it's all completely fake):

Binks, Jojo. Personal Letter to Amanda Garcia. 31 October 1937.

> "My favorite thing about going to school here is that students love to dance around the quad naked on a regular basis."

Queens College Official Charter. Queens College, Oct. 2001. Web. 12 May 2002.

> "Students at Queens College have, since the college's inception, been uniformly well-behaved and focused on scholastics more than on any forms of extracurricular activities."

"Ten Sentence Patterns"
Waddell, Esch, and Walker

The sentence patterns below are adapted from Marie L. Waddell, Robert Esch, and Roberta R. Walker's *The Art of Styling Sentences: 20 Patterns for Success*, 2nd ed. (New York: Barrons, 1993).

1. Compound Sentence: Semicolon, No Conjunction

> *Example*: The vicuña is a gentle animal living in the central Andes; its fleece often becomes the fabric for expensive coats.

> *Same as above with a **connector**, such as <u>however</u>, <u>hence</u>, <u>therefore</u>, <u>thus</u>, <u>then</u>, <u>moreover</u>, <u>nevertheless</u>, <u>likewise</u>, <u>consequently</u>, and <u>accordingly</u>.

> *Example*: This gadget won't work; therefore, there's no sense in buying it.

> *Same as above but with a **coordinating conjunction** (also a connector) such as <u>and</u>, <u>or</u>, <u>for</u>, <u>but</u>, <u>nor</u>, <u>yet</u>, or <u>so</u>.

> *Example*: It was snowing outside, and in the building Harold felt safe; he dreaded leaving his shelter for the long, dangerous trip home.

2. Compound Sentence with Explanatory Statement

> *Example*: Darwin's <u>Origin of the Species</u> forcibly states a harsh truth: only the fittest survive.

3. A Series without a Conjunction

> *Example*: The goals of the ecology-awareness movement are clear: breathable air, drinkable water, livable space, potable waterways.

Example: The attorney impeached her own credibility, misrepresenting the record, divining meanings that only she perceived, discovering motives that only she comprehended, denying the undeniable.

Example: The world of art is as universal as the wall paintings of primitive people, as varied as Picasso's art, as fleeting as some modern art, as enduring as Rembrandt.

4. Dependent Clauses in a Pair or in a Series

Example: Because it might seem difficult at first, because it may sound awkward or forced, because it often creates lengthy sentences where the thought "gets lost," this pattern seems forbidding to some writers, but it isn't all that hard; try it.

Example: In Biology 3130, Stella learned that a hummingbird does not really hum, that a screech owl actually whistles, and that storks prefer to wade in water than fly around carrying tiny babies.

5. Interrupting Modifier Between Subject and Verb

Example: A small drop of ink, falling like dew upon a thought, can make millions think.

Example: A small drop of ink, falling (as Byron said) like dew upon a thought, can make millions think.

6. A Full Sentence as Interrupting Modifier

Example: An important question about education—should universities teach the classics or just courses in science and practical subjects?—was the topic of a famous debate by Arnold and Huxley.

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7. Introductory or Concluding Participles

Example: Printed in Old English and bound in real leather, the new edition of <u>Beowulf</u> was too expensive for the family to buy.

Example: The wrangler reached for his lasso, knowing he must help to corral the straying steers.

8. Paired Constructions

Example: American tourists must realize that violation of laws in China are serious not only because they flaunt traditional codes of behavior but also because they reflect contempt for the culture.

9. The Short Simple Sentence for Relief or Dramatic Effect

Example: Days passed.

Example: But then it happened.

10. A Short Question for Dramatic Effect

Example: What caused the change?

"Responding to Writing"
Bard Institute for Writing and Thinking

Preparation for faculty

Here are two ways to prepare students for this type of Peer Review:

1) In previous classes, practice using the "responding to writing" prompts with assigned readings. Then before the Peer Review session, pass out the list and remind students that they have been using these strategies already, and that they should use them now for advising their colleagues on their own writing. This creates a connection between the course readings and students' own writings.

2) Use an exemplary piece of student writing from a previous class (ideally, the same or a similar assignment) to practice on. This is effective because it shows students the successful end result of the writing assignment.

Advice for students

Do comment, listen, rephrase (e.g., "this phrase stood out to me ...", "I notice that you make the following assumptions. . .", "From my understanding, your main point seems to be . . .")

Don't judge or evaluate (forbidden phrases: "I really liked the way you...", "It didn't quite work when you . . .")

These restrictions compel students to break out of the limiting and unhelpful I like/don't like dialogue that Peer Review can quickly turn into. The goal of this Peer Review is for writers to get a sense of how their ideas are interpreted by specific readers, and requiring students to focus on these types of non-judgmental responses encourages more careful and meaningful responses about the content of their peers' writing.

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Active listening: the simple act of reading a text aloud to attentive listeners can heighten an author's attention to the writing and prepare the way for future discussions.

Say back: listeners record striking words and phrases as the text is read and subsequently read them back to the author without additional comment.

Centers of gravity: "centers of gravity" are specific places in a text that seem especially important, interesting, or generative. A given center of gravity may or may not be the ostensible thesis or main idea of the piece.

Summary: respondents summarize their understanding of the text. Discrepancies between what the writer "meant to say" and what respondents "heard" may tell writers how their texts are being construed or misconstrued and thus serve as useful guides for revision.

What's lurking?: what is "coming through" to the reader that is not being said overtly? Identifying this can help writers to recognize further implications of what they've written and to think through possible revisions.

More about: what do respondents want to hear more about? Answering this question can help writers better understand readers' desires.

Voice and tone: in academic writing, one often struggles to find an appropriate voice (public yet not impersonal or abstract), and it can be helpful to attend directly to this issue. A discussion of voice can also help writers make important stylistic decisions or recognize and reflect on their attitudes toward their subjects (e.g., is there a latent sarcasm in the piece? Is the writer guarded or overly deferential?).

Structure: how do the various parts of the text (paragraphs, sections, stanzas) relate to one another and contribute to the whole? Responding to this question can help writers think about how the text is organized and how it might be revised.

"Mad-Lib & Script for Group Conferences"
Gloria Fisk

Hi Friends,

I have some tentative plans for my revision of my research essay that I want to run by you. Please help me, because I want to write the best revision that I can possibly write (!).

As I revise, I think I might need to _____
                                                                        (verb)
my **thesis** by _____ . . .
                        (gerund verb)

I also plan to _____ my **motive**. Can you help me
                        (verb)
name it?

My **structure** is a little _____, so I think I'll
                                                (adjective)
_____ . . .
                (verb)

My **evidence** seems _____ to me, and I
                                        (adjective)
have some questions about how I'm using it. For example. . .

One other question that I have is...

Wow, thanks, guys. You're awesome! Let's talk about how we can keep helping each other over the next couple of weeks, and let's plan our next step now.

Your Script for the Draft Workshop

(Begin by deciding which of these questions are most relevant to you, because you don't have to ask every question, and you may want to add some of your own. The only one that is required is #1.)

1. One thing that I think is awesome about my draft is the fact that I wrote it. What else do you think is awesome about it? Please be specific.

2. Can you locate my thesis in my introduction, and can you paraphrase it in your own words? Does it guide you through my essay securely, or are there places where you lose sight of it?

3. Can you describe my "motivating move"? Which of Gaipa's eight strategies do you think I'm using?

4. Did you find my evidence convincing, and did I include enough of it to support the claims that I make? Are there any places where you think I need to make more specific reference to the texts?

5. Does my analysis of the evidence make sense to you, and are there any places where you think I need more or less of it to prove my claims?

6. Did each paragraph convey to you a clear main idea that advances my thesis? If not, where did you see me wander?

7. Was there any place where you, my reader, furrowed your brow in confusion, irritation, or disagreement?

A Peer Review Workshop
Kerry Walk

The Peer Review Workshop

In a writing workshop, the class as a whole offers constructive feedback on the writing of a few class members. The time involved is anywhere from five minutes to an hour and a half—in other words, the writing workshop is an extraordinarily flexible teaching method. It's extraordinarily useful, too, and not just for the student writers on the "hot seat," who learn first-hand how real readers respond to their work. Students whose role is to give feedback benefit in two major ways. First, they learn about the qualities of writing most valued in the discipline. Second, by becoming better critics of others' writing, they become better critics of their own. This is an important step, because self-critique is essential for effective revision

A workshop on a piece of writing between 5 and 20 pages in length is likely to run between 30 and 45 minutes. A workshop on a shorter piece will be accordingly shorter—in fact, as little as five minutes. Here's a typical structure for a workshop on a 7- to 10-page draft:

5 minutes: *State the purpose of the workshop and establish ground rules. Purpose:* To give the writer some feedback but also to give others the chance to practice critiquing writing. Critiquing others' writing is the first step toward becoming a good reviser; self-critique is the second step. *Ground Rules:* These may be that the writer should remain silent for the first 10 minutes to hear how readers have read his or her draft, and that commentators should remember that the writer is a real, live person with real, live feelings. Also: Remind the person on the "hot seat" to take notes.

30 minutes: *Discuss first the strengths and then the weaknesses of the draft, and how the writer might revise.* This is the heart of the workshop and will take the most time. Especially in the weaknesses discussion, ask students to look closely at the text—at particular sections, paragraphs, or elements. If you suspect that everyone is having trouble structuring the introduction, discussing a figure or table, or using secondary sources effectively, you can draw students' attention to a useful spot in the text so as to work through the general problem. Eventually, be sure to turn from critique to concrete advice: How should the writer revise? For a useful terminology, see Gordon Harvey's "Elements of the Academic Essay."

5-10 minutes: *Sum up, then ask students to relate their own current writing experience to the discussion.* These are the two crucial moves! Without this summary/discussion, students may think the workshop was a waste of time for everyone but the writer. At this point, you could also have writing groups of two or three students exchange and discuss their drafts, based on what they learned in the large group about what to look for. If you'd like the writing groups to meet outside of class, simply give them a few minutes in class to get organized.

1 minute: *Once the workshop is over, students should give their draft responses to the writer(s), with a copy to the professor.* This process can also take place via email or on the course website. One quick way to encourage students to write better draft responses is to photocopy a good draft response, annotate its strengths, and distribute it to students in the next class session.

The Cover Letter

The cover letter, which students include with their papers, gives them an opportunity to set the terms of the workshop experience.

Please include a cover letter with your draft in which you answer the questions below and present any other concerns that you have. Think of the cover letter as an opportunity to ask for the kind of feedback you need. All cover letters should be about a single page double-spaced.

- What do you see as your main idea or point?
- What idea or point do you feel you've made most successfully? least successfully?
- What's the number one question about your paper that you'd like your reader to answer for you?
- If you were going to start revising today, what would you focus on?

Sample Cover Letter

Dear Reader:
The main idea of this paper is to show why the character of Horatio was needed in the play and how Hamlet made use of him. The speech I've chosen to examine implies a special relationship between the two characters, one that I've also tried to explore. It seems to me that Hamlet uses Horatio to fill in the gaps that were created by his madness and political intrigues at court, though I'm not sure this idea comes across clearly enough.

The point I think that I've made most successfully has to do with Horatio's overall quality, a point that I reinforce throughout the paper. But I would really like to more fully explore Hamlet's personal doubts and complaints as reflected in his speech, especially concerning his potential insanity. It just seems to me that my thesis could be stronger. I also think I need to work on my structure. I think the overall organization works—intro, background on

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Horatio, discussion of the speech, discussion of Horatio's importance to Hamlet, conclusion—but within each section, I'm having trouble linking my ideas to my thesis. Each paragraph needs to have a purpose that's unique, yet not so different that it doesn't fit into the essay. That's the trouble I'm having.

Aside from the questions I have about thesis and structure, I'd like to know, How can I make the "speech" portion of my paper stronger? It needs to be more carefully planned and to end with a bang, not a whimper. Any help you can give me about how to expand this part of the paper and make it strongly would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you for your help and for taking the time to read this draft!

Sincerely, [Student's Name]

The Draft Response

The draft response, which readers write in the form of a letter to the draft writer, gives students an opportunity to formulate their ideas before arriving at the workshop. As such, it all but ensures a high-level discussion.

You can expect to spend at least 30 minutes reading and responding to the draft. As you carefully read each draft, write marginal notes to the writer on anything that puzzles you, then write a letter to the writer in which you address these questions:

- In your own words, what's this paper about? (What's its idea?) Don't assume that the writer knows what his or her own paper is about! Mistrust the stated thesis (if there is one).

- What do you see as the strength(s) of the draft?

- Identify two elements of academic writing (thesis, structure, etc.) that you think the writer should focus on in revising, and discuss these in relation to the draft. Try to point to specific sentences and paragraphs whenever possible.

- In the cover letter, the writer has asked one or more questions. What answers do you have to offer?

Sample Draft Response

Dear [Fellow Student],

To me, your paper is about the fact that Hamlet chooses Horatio as an ally because he recognizes in Horatio the strength and clarity of mind that he lacks in himself. This is a good idea. I like how you consistently tie this idea into your paragraphs throughout the paper. Your stitching is also very good, and I felt that the transitions between paragraphs were pretty smooth. Good job with that.

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I think you're right when you say in your cover letter that the thesis could be stronger. I think the thesis needs a little work. It doesn't really address a problem that you have with Hamlet's speech; it's more of a statement about the value of his friend. I think part of the general problem you're having is that you don't tie the actual speech into the paper enough. The introductory paragraph doesn't mention the speech at all, and the paper is supposed to be about the speech. If you focus more on the text and adjust your thesis so that it addresses a specific aspect of the speech, you might have an easier time making the point of your paper more clear.

The other element that I would focus on when you revise the paper is style. Sometimes your word choice and use of idiomatic phrases detracts from the quality of the paper. Some of the things you state would be fine in casual conversation, but are not appropriate in an academic essay. For example, on p. 2, you say that Hamlet is not "on top form," and on p. 4, you say that Hamlet decided to "get serious." You could put these ideas another way.

In terms of other stuff, I like the comparison to other Shakespearean works in your intro. I was a little taken by surprise when you mentioned the possibility of a romantic relationship between Hamlet and Horatio later in the paper because I definitely didn't see that coming, but I kind of like the idea. It's definitely an interesting perspective that deserves to be mentioned, and you do a fairly good job of providing evidence for it. Maybe you should just prepare your reader somehow beforehand so the theory doesn't seem like it's coming out of nowhere.

In general, I would say focus on your thesis and on incorporating the speech more into your essay, and be careful not to let your "street voice" creep into the essay. If you can solidify the thesis so that it focuses more on a problem or on a unique interpretation, then I think the paper will be much more effective overall. Good luck, and try to get a couple hours of sleep :)

Sincerely, [Fellow Student]

Three Sample Grading Rubrics

Your professor may decide to use a rubric like these to assess your writing. Even if he or she does not, these rubrics will give you an idea of what professors look for in college writing.

Sample 1 (Adapted from Northern Illinois University)

SCORING SCALE					
← begin here →					
--6--	--5--	--4--	--3--	--2--	--1--
and demonstrates exceptional insight into the topic.	and gives the topic sharp focus and pleasing shape	Engages a topic while persuading reader of writer's commitment	Does not engage an appropriate topic	and fails to give topic focus or shape	and persuades readers that writer lacks commitment to the topic.
and may use that voice creatively.	and maintains control of voice	Establishes a voice appropriate to the topic	Does not always stay on topic, sometimes adopts an inappropriate voice	and frequently adopts an inappropriate voice	and may appear incoherent.
and may show insight into problematic or provocative aspects of the topic, or generate a unique stance or original taxonomy.	and arranges material to create confidence in readers	Clarifies major aims, arranges material to support aims, and provides enough material to satisfy expectations of readers	Does not always make major aims clear, arrange material to support aims, or provide enough material to satisfy readers' expectations	and confuses readers about its major aims or develops no major point adequately	and may persuade readers that it has no major aims or provides little or no relevant material.

and may make an original contribution to the conversation initiated by the source material.	and weaves source material seamlessly into the texture of the piece	Interacts effectively with sources, subordinating them to the writer's purposes and creating confidence that they have been represented fairly	Does not always interact effectively with sources, sometimes allowing them to dominate the writer's purpose or creating doubt that they have been fairly represented	and frequently does not interact effectively with sources, regularly allowing them to dominate the writer's purpose or creating doubt that they have been fairly represented	and may fail to interact with sources, or appear not to represent them fairly.
and may use such conventions creatively.	and shows command of those conventions	Demonstrates satisfactory control of the conventions of the relevant discourse community	Does not always demonstrate satisfactory control of the conventions of the relevant discourse community	and will frequently violate those conventions	and may seem unaware of the relevant conventions.
and may use elements of presentation imaginatively or elegantly.	and approaches presentation expectations of appropriate published sources	Polishes elements of presentation (layout/format, printing, conventions) to meet expectations of the intended audience	Does not always polish elements of presentation to meet expectations of intended audience	and appears frequently unconcerned with those expectations	and may seem entirely unconcerned with those expectation.

Sample 2 (from Arizona's "Official Scoring Guide")

In order to earn a grade of C, a paper must fulfill all of the stated content and format requirements for the assignment. Beyond this basic requirement, grades reflect the standards described below.

A papers will possess all of the following characteristics:

- Clear, focused, and interesting content suited to audience and purpose
- Organization that is effective and easy to follow, including a strong introduction and conclusion and smooth, effective transitions
- Sentences that show a high degree of craftsmanship, with consistently strong and varied structure
- Exceptionally strong control of standard writing conventions: errors so few and so minor that the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them

B papers may fulfill many of the A paper characteristics, with possible difference(s) such as:

- Clear and focused content suited to audience and purpose
- Predictable organization, introduction and conclusion adequate, transitions present
- Strong control over simple sentences, but variable control over more complex sentences
- Occasional lapses in correct grammar and usage

C papers may parallel a few A paper characteristics and/or many B paper characteristics, with possible difference(s) such as (but not limited to):

- Easily identifiable purpose and main ideas, but lacking focus and/or clarity

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- Somewhat unclear or under-developed, despite attempts at organization
- Little control of complex sentences; repetitive sentence patterns; ineffective fragments
- Errors in grammar and usage that do not block meaning but do distract the reader, or some control over conventions in a text that is too simple to reveal mastery

D papers may parallel many of the C paper characteristics, with possible difference(s) such as (but not limited to):

- Fulfilling only some of the stated requirements
- Ideas that are somewhat unclear, minimally developed or cluttered with irrelevant details
- A lack of effective organizational structure which leaves the reader confused
- A significant number of sentences that are awkward, choppy, or rambling
- Errors in grammar and usage that interfere with readability and meaning

F papers may be deficient in that they:

- Fulfill few or none of the stated requirements
- Lack a central idea or purpose
- Are not clearly organized
- Contain sentence structure that frequently obscures meaning
- Demonstrate very limited skill in using conventions

Sample 3 (from Gordon Harvey, Harvard University)

When I evaluate your formal assignments, I am looking for inventive ideas expressed in engaging prose. Your writing should both please and enlighten readers and give them a sense of why your project is important—why what you have to say needs to be said. I evaluate the words on the page before me and do not factor in potential, improvement, or effort. The work you put into an assignment will most certainly be evident in the completed essay. These are the general standards to which I hold essays. Plusses and minuses represent shades of difference. (I will provide more detailed explanation of my grading standards when I return graded assignments.)

- An "A" range essay is both ambitious and successful. It presents and develops focused and compelling set of ideas with grace, confidence, and control. It integrates and responds to sources subtly and persuasively.

- A "B" range essay is one that is ambitious but only partially successful, or one that achieves modest aims well. A "B" essay must contain focused ideas, but these ideas may not be particularly complex, or may not be presented or supported well at every point. It integrates sources efficiently, if not always gracefully.

- A "C" range essay has significant problems in articulating and presenting its central ideas, though it is usually focused and coherent. Such essays often lack clarity and use source material in simple ways, without significant analysis or insight.

- A "D" range essay fails to grapple seriously with either ideas or texts, or fails to address the expectations of the assignment. A "D" essay distinguishes itself from a failing essay by showing moments of promise, such as emerging, though not sufficiently developed or articulated ideas. "D" essays do not use sources well, though there may some effort to do so.

- A failing essay does not grapple with either ideas or texts, or does not address the expectations of the assignment. It is often unfocused or incoherent.

How to Avoid Plagiarism

When Andy Warhol and Salvador Dalí incorporated Leonardo DaVinci's Mona Lisa into their paintings, or when Jay-Z sampled soul legend Isaac Hayes in "Empire State of Mind," they were building on the works of others to make new works with new meaning. Many of your professors will ask you to do the same when you write academic essays that draw on the writing and ideas of others. When you do this, you need to cite the work of these other writers, just as Warhol, Dalí, and Jay-Z had to follow the copyright guidelines and laws that apply to visual art and music. These citations are an expression of academic integrity.

Writing in college means taking part in a conversation with other scholars. Academic citation is how you demonstrate the relationship between your ideas and those of others. On the other hand, plagiarism is the failure to demonstrate that relationship: this looks like stealing other's ideas.

You can gain the authority you need to enter these conversations by learning different ways to engage with sources. Authority is not something you already have, or that you find somewhere: when you write a college paper you create your own authority. Writer Mark Gaipa emphasizes this point when he argues that "[a]uthority . . . is less a characteristic than a relationship that a writer has with other authors" (419). What he shows is that your authority as a writer comes in large part from the way you can relate to other writers. Your college writing assignments will help you practice different ways of relating to other writers.

–Mark Gaipa, "Breaking into the Conversation: How Students Can Acquire Authority for Their Writing," *Pedagogy* 4.3 (2004): 419-437. Print.

Visit <http://writingatqueens.qc.cuny.edu/for-students/what-is-plagiarism/> for answers to questions like:

HOW DO I . . .

. . . Avoid Plagiarism?
Many students are surprised to hear their papers contain plagiarism; what are some of the common misunderstandings about how to properly use sources?

. . . Revise a Paper that Has Plagiarism?
The first step if your instructor has told you that your paper has plagiarism is to understand why: is it a problem with Citing, Summarizing, or Paraphrasing (the three main ways to use sources)?

. . . Use Online Sources?
If your instructor allows you to use general resources found on the Internet such as a website, free database, or Wikipedia, how do you know whether you are looking at a trustworthy source?

. . . Use Library Sources
Your instructor may require you to use scholarly sources found in the Library or on one of the electronic databases the Library subscribes to: but where do you begin to find what you need?

. . . Engage with a Scholarly Source?
You may be asked to use a particular author or text to make an argument: what are the different ways you may "use" this author's ideas without feeling like you're just repeating them back?

. . . Know the Difference between the Three Skills: Quotation, Paraphrase, and Summary?
Even though quoting seems like the safe way to avoid plagiarism, you also should know when and how to paraphrase or summarize long texts.

. . . Know How to Use Paraphrase Fairly?
You do not always need to use quotation; many times your writing will be more effective if you paraphrase another author's idea. But how do you do this without just making cosmetic changes?

. . . Use Quotation Marks, Brackets, and Ellipses to Create an Effective Citation?
Instead of dumping whole chunks of quotation in your writing, learn how to use brackets and ellipses to just focus on the most important aspects of the source you are using.

. . . Use the Technique of Incorporating Quotations?
There is a way to make the quotations you cite a more natural part of your writing; your instructor might call this "incorporating quotes," which is how you revise what you want to avoid: "dropped quotes."

. . . Know the Difference between Citation Styles?
There are a number of citation styles, such as MLA, APA, and Chicago style. Your professors will ask you to use the citation style that works best for the kinds of work required in their discipline. It's important to know about the variety of citation styles and to use each with consistency.

. . . Create a Citation using APA?
APA style tends to be used in the sciences and social sciences.

. . . Create a Citation using MLA?
MLA style tends to be used in the humanities, especially literature courses.
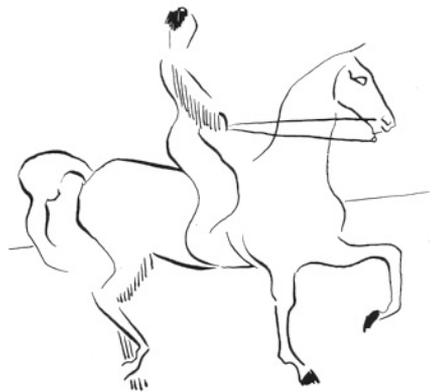
. . . Create a Citation using Chicago?
Chicago style is also common in the humanities, but may be used for other disciplines as well.

. . . Get Help if I'm an ESL Student?
There are a variety of resources available for students whose native language is not English, both on campus and online.

"Teaching, Learning, & Assessing Writing in Digital Environments"
CCCC

CCCC's Position Statement on "Teaching, Learning, and Assessing Writing in Digital Environments" helps frame best practices: http://www.ncte.org/library/NCTEFiles/Resources/Journals/CCC/0554-june04/CO0554Position.pdf. It reads in part:

Courses that engage students in writing digitally may have many features, but all of them should:
- introduce students to the epistemic (knowledge-constructing) characteristics of information technology, some of which are generic to information technology and some of which are specific to the fields in which the information technology is used;
- provide students with opportunities to apply digital technologies to solve substantial problems common to the academic, professional, civic, and/or personal realm of their lives;
- include much hands-on use of technologies;
- engage students in the critical evaluation of information; and
- prepare students to be reflective practitioners.

Defining Digital Writing

We define digital writing as *the art and practice of composition in networked multimedia environments*. Whenever we write or assign web essays, online discussions, blog posts, tweets, and audiovisual texts, we are engaged in digital writing. Defining digital writing requires rethinking many of the skills required of print-based writing as well as adding new skills and concepts to your course vocabulary.

Digital Writing in Practice

This means regular and substantial use of real, web-based technologies to produce, navigate, revise, and/or publish writing.

- "Regular and substantial" means at least once a week.
- "Real" means that students learn very basic, transferable computer literacy skills necessary for digital writing, like how to create hyperlinks, how to organize information in both linear and tabular form, how to deploy visual evidence, or how to use online writing and research tools.
- "Web-based technologies" means the Internet but excludes simple offline software programs like word-processing.
- I don't know what "produce, navigate, revise, and/or publish writing" means, but it includes everything you would want it to include (including "reading").

So, weekly blog responses, a final online portfolio, use of Google Doc or wiki as a collaborative drafting platform, or visualizing library databases, but *not*: using a word processing program, emailing drafts, or reading articles on a computer screen or tablet.

Digital Writing Assignment Ideas

Here are ten sample low-stakes, ungraded, informal assignments that address Gordon Harvey's "Elements of the Academic Essay":

- Use a chatroom to discuss and revise three possible titles for an upcoming paper. Create a Google form that allows the class to vote for the best one. (#13 Title)

- Having read 2-3 short articles on netiquette and email, students in pairs create an email chain, one person adopting the role of "bad" internet user and the other modeling good "netiquette." (#11 Stance)

- Make 5-7 marginal comments on a student's draft in Google Docs. Each comment should relate to one of Harvey's "elements" that the class has studied so far, say #7 Stitching.

- Students have composed a blog post in Wordpress in response to a topic and then later revised it to account for new information. Using the "version" feature, students compare the different versions and reflect on and describe their writing process. (#6 Structure)

- Use the library's electronic resources collaboratively to draft a research bibliography of electronic resources. Consider using a Zotero collection. (#3 Evidence)

- In groups of three, students use the colored highlight feature of Google Docs to annotate a shared text, paying attention to one Harvey's elements, say #9 Reflecting. Mark, say, "counter-arguments" in red, "new concerns" in blue, or "qualifications" in yellow.

- Crowd-source a hyperlinked list of websites about an author or text. Evaluate the sites and post brief annotations addressing their scholarly value. (#8 Sources)

- Using a text-analysis website like Voyant, analyze a peer's draft papers use of particular keyterms. Offer revision suggestions based on the result. (#5 Keyterms)

- Search a social media like Twitter.com to identify posts about a course reading. Characterize the style of these posts and draft responses to 5 of them (don't actually need to post). (#12 Style)

- In small groups, use Google Slides, Pinterest, or Tumblr to curate a persuasive slide-show presentation of creative commons images that outlines a rationale for an upcoming assignment. (#2 Motive)

Qwriting

Qwriting is an open-source, digital writing platform customized to support a broad range of ways members of the Queens College community interact online. Qwriting offers students, faculty, and staff opportunities to experiment, share, create, play, read, collaborate, and learn.

Sign up here: http://qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/ and contact Writing at Queens for training/support.

Multiliteracies for a Digital Age
Stuart Selber

We are aiming to teach students *rhetorical literacy*, which, concerns the design and evaluation of online environments; thus students who are rhetorically literate can effect change in technological systems. Students should not be just effective users of computers, nor should they just be informed questioners. Although these two roles are essential, neither one encourages a sufficient level of participation. In order to function most effectively as agents of change, students must also become reflective producers of technology, a role that involves a combination of functional and critical abilities. (182)

Conceptual Landscape of Computer Multiliteracies

Category	Metaphor	Subject Position	Objective
Functional Literacy	computers as tools	students as users of technology	effective employment
Critical Literacy	computers as cultural artifacts	students as questioners of technology	informed critique
Rhetorical Literacy	computers as hypertextual media	students as producers of technology	reflective praxis

1. Parameters of a Functional Approach to Computer Literacy

Parameters	Qualities of a Functionally Literate Student
Educational Goals	A functionally literate student uses computers effectively in achieving educational goals.
Social Conventions	A functionally literate student understands the social conventions that help determine computer use.
Specialized Discourses	A functionally literate student makes use of the specialized discourses associated with computers.
Management Activities	A functionally literate student effectively manages his or her online world.
Technological Impasses	A functionally literate student resolves technological impasses confidently and strategically

2. Parameters of a Critical Approach to Computer Literacy

Parameters	Qualities of a Critically Literate Student
Design Cultures	A critically literate student scrutinizes the dominant perspectives that shape computer design cultures and their artifacts.
Use Contexts	A critically literate student sees use contexts as an inseparable aspect of computers that helps to contextualize and constitute them.
Institutional Forces	A critically literate student understands the institutional forces that shape computer use.
Popular Representations	A critically literate student scrutinizes representations of computers in the public imagination.

3. Parameters of a Rhetorical Approach to Computer Literacy

Parameters	Qualities of a Rhetorically Literate Student
Persuasion	A rhetorically literate student understands that persuasion permeates interface design contexts in both implicit and explicit ways and that it always involves larger structures and forces (e.g., use contexts, ideology).
Deliberation	A rhetorically literate student understands that interface design problems are ill-defined problems whose solutions are representational arguments that have been arrived at through various deliberative activities.
Reflection	A rhetorically literate student articulates his or her interface design knowledge at a conscious level and subjects their actions and practices to critical assessment.
Social Action	A rhetorically literate student sees interface design as a form of social versus technical action.

Where to Get Help with Writing On Campus

Your Instructors
If you have questions about your writing, talk to your instructors. They can help you determine which areas you should work on and offer strategies to help you improve. They may also direct you to other resources on campus—for example, the Writing Center or the Writing at Queens website.

The Writing Center: Kiely Hall 229 (718-997-5676)
The Writing Center's mission is to help students grow and mature as writers by helping them build on their strengths and overcome whatever difficulties they may have with writing. That is, our goal is to make better writers, not better essays. Specific essays will improve, but only because their writers are sharpening their abilities.

In other words, the Writing Center is not an essay repair shop. Tutors will not edit or proofread essays; instead, they will help writers learn how to do these things for themselves. Nor will tutors tell writers what to write, what to think, or give them ideas. In this way, as much as possible, we work with students in a nondirective fashion through individual sessions in which writers work one-on-one with undergraduate or graduate writing tutor.

All writers have problems; even accomplished writers may experience difficulties with writing when they try to write about complex and unfamiliar subjects, when they attempt new writing tasks, when conditions undermine their ability to write, or when problems distract them. At such times, they will seek out feedback from other writers. Student writers face similar obstacles, and they deserve (and get) our attention and respect when they attempt to address them.

The help we provide seeks to promote independence. The advice we give in tutorial sessions is professional and, as already stated, nondirective. The tutoring sessions belong to the students, and that is why students have

access to the records we keep of their work with us and why we do not notify teachers of their students' visits if students ask us not to.

The Writing Center offers one-on-one tutoring in three forms: regular appointments over the course of the semester, drop-in appointments, and online tutoring.

A. In-Person Appointments:
Students needing help with their writing can get a one-hour drop-in appointment or be assigned a weekly one-hour appointment.

The aspects of writing to be covered will be decided by the student and the tutor or by instructor recommendation. This personalized work aims to correct specific writing problems and reinforce writing strengths. Your initial appointment will be for four consecutive weeks; it can be extended beyond that period if the tutor recommends it and you attend each session. If you miss the first appointment, you will lose it.

B. "Dropping-In":
A student who needs help with writing can get a "Drop-In" appointment by reserving one of the drop-in hours we now have scheduled each day or by coming to the Writing Center at the beginning of each hour during our hours of operation.

C. Online Tutoring:
A student can get feedback on essays via the internet. For more information, go to <http://writingatqueens.qc.cuny.edu/the-writing-center/e-tutoring/>.

The Library

For your assigned research papers, you will most likely be required to use the resources at Rosenthal Library. For General Research Tutorials see <http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/library/ research/tutorials/index.php>

You can get further help by

1) Calling: (718) 997-3664

2) Visiting the Research Services Room, past the stairs on Level 3 (Room 344). Ideal for all inquiries and available during Library open hours starting at 9 AM weekdays and at 12:00 noon on weekends

3) Sending an email: <http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/library/research/ emaillibrarian.php>

Where to Get Help with Writing Online

Writing at Queens (WaQ) Website
<http://writingatqueens.org/>
The WaQ website contains a host of resources to help students with their writing, including handouts on various elements of writing and the process of writing and links to online guides for writing.

Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL)
<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>
The Online Writing Lab (OWL) at Purdue University houses writing resources and instructional material, and we provide these as a free service of the Writing Lab at Purdue. Students, members of the community, and users worldwide will find information to assist with many writing projects. Teachers and trainers may use this material for in-class and out-of-class instruction.

Department Websites
<http://writingatqueens.qc.cuny.edu/for-students/discipline-specific-writing>
Some departments on campus have websites devoted to writing in their discipline. Check the above website for an up-to-date list.

CUNY WriteSite
<http://writesite.cuny.edu/>
The WriteSite is an Online Writing Lab, or OWL—a collection of writing resources and a way of interacting with other CUNY writers through the Internet. It complements face-to-face resources, like your campus Writing Center, and it's always open. You could call it a "night OWL," or a "weekend OWL," because it's always here, ready to help you.

All illustrations from *The Queens College Silhouette* Yearbook, June 1942:
<http://qcpages.qc.edu/history/wwiiveterans/yearbooks.html>