

Writing Assignment Hints for Students

Free Writing – 5 minutes

- Just write anything that comes to mind.
 - On or off topic.
- Good for writer's block.
- How many require writing prior to program entry?
 - During program?

Writing in College

- Writing plays a part in college and work goals.
- Good writing is hard, but it is achievable.
- People are not born good writers; they learn.
- Need tools and strategies.

Why Write?

- Promotes critical thinking and creativity.
- Connection between reading and writing.
- Writing common communication.
- Every day.
 - Read.
 - Hear.
 - Observe.
 - Write.

Critical Thinking

- Need to judge, question, evaluate information.
- Will affect decisions.
- To write need to:
 - Analyze (take apart).
 - Synthesize (put together).
 - Evaluate (make conclusions).
 - Communicate (memos, letters, reports, papers).

Critical Thinking

- Eight questions to assess information:
 - Frame of reference: What is the perspective of the writer?
 - Purpose: What is the writer's aim?
 - Question: What is the question asked or problem solved?
 - Information: What facts, statistics, or personal experiences are presented?

- Interpretation/inferences: How is information interpreted and are inferences correct?
- Concepts: What are the ideas or concepts?
- Assumptions: What does the writer take for granted as true?
- Implications/consequences: What are the implications of topic and what consequences follow based on reasoning?

Types of Writing Assignments

- Journal.
- Professional article summaries.
- Book review for professional journal.
- Article for professional journal or competition.
- Letter to the editor.
- Short paper.
- Research paper.

Creating Writing Assignments

- Writing assignments can be productive for teacher and student.
- Creating assignment time to determine.
 - Kind of writing you expect.
 - Instructions students need to successfully complete.
 - Why we think it is important.

Creating Assignments

- Good assignment construction.
 - Informs student exactly what is expected.
 - Why they are asked to do it.
 - Avoids withholding our expectations.

Questions to Consider

- Purpose: Why have students do assignment?
 - Fit with objectives for course.
 - Relation to what comes before/after.
- Are students prepared?
 - Consider placement in course.
 - Coordinated with instruction so they can do it.
 - Will there be enough time to complete?

Questions

- How do you want them to do it?
 - How much will you assist with planning, drafting, revising and editing?

- Will students hand in at stages?
- What is the context of assignment?
 - Audience, role, for class or journal.
- What format used? Conventions?
- How will you evaluate?
 - Do students know criteria?

Prewriting Activities

- To help get started.
 - Listing.
 - Concept map.
 - Free writing.
 - Questions.
 - Annotating texts.
 - Talking and listening.

Prewriting Activities

- Listing
 - List ideas as they occur
 - Can rearrange later.
- Concept mapping
 - Shows relationships among ideas
 - Topic in center, connect to ideas

Prewriting Activities

- Free writing.
 - Nonstop writing for 10 minutes.
 - Brainstorming.
- Questions.
 - Can generate ideas on topic.
 - Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Prewriting Activities

- Annotating texts.
 - Write comments or questions on pages.
 - Photocopy if needed.
- Talking and listening.
 - Brainstorm ideas in group or with friend.
 - Can also use e-mail or chat.
 - Helps to deepen ideas.

Checklist for Writing

- Save time in constructing writing by having checklist of things to consider when working on a paper.
 - Subject.
 - Sources of information.
 - Purpose.
 - Audience.
 - Length and design.
 - Reviewers and deadline.

Assessment Assistance

- Students will be more successful when they know what you want with assignment and their work is reviewed.
 - Prospectus.
 - Peer draft review.
 - Rubric.
- This will also make your job easier.

Classroom Writing

- If students have little writing experience brief writing exercises in class can help, with papers and text questions.
- Give question in class, have them write.
 - Share answers with each other and class.
- Use transitions to have them write.
- Give sentence completion exercises.

Transitions

- Complete the following transition connected sentences.
 - This morning, _____ . However, _____ .
So _____ . After that _____ .

Writing is Work!

- Generate ideas.
- Plan, draft, develop.
- Revise, edit.
- Don't have to do in order.
- Often skip around.
- Activities encompass critical thinking and creativity.

Basic Writing

- May need to give students basics of paper construction.
- Paragraph writing.

- Topic sentence.
 - Main idea or topic.
- Support sentences.
 - Explain, clarify and define.

Basic Writing

- Essay, combination of many paragraphs.
- Introduction.
- Body.
- Conclusion.

Introductory Paragraph

- Overall topic (single).
- Importance of topic.
 - Writer's attitude.
- Scope of paper.
- Set tone.
- Not stated as fact or question.
- Structure of paper set here.

Body

- Paragraphs following introduction will develop topic and support writer's attitude.
- Give facts, details, examples.
- May want to outline or ask questions.
- Use ideas from prewriting activities to build here.

Body

- Outline.
 - Topic.
 - Idea or attitude.
 - Supporting ideas.
- Questions.
 - Who?
 - What?
 - Where?
 - When?
 - Why?
 - How?

Concluding Paragraph

- No new points.
- Sense of completion.

- Can re-emphasize central theme.
- Summation of points.
- Can also lead to:
 - Action.
 - Warning.
 - Prediction of outcomes.
 - Evaluation or judgment of topic.

Editing

- Students often need help in this area.
- Peer draft review will help.
- Get rid of unnecessary words.
- Choose better words to get point across.
- Rearrange words for stronger, clearer order.
- Use accurate transitions.

Editing

- Check word usage.
- Check grammar.
 - Subject and verb.
 - Pronouns.
 - Verb tenses.
- Proofread, and then have someone else proof it too.

Criteria

- When students know criteria.
 - Helps development.
 - Gives purpose.
- Rubric can be useful for instructor and student, sets criteria.
- Rubrics help develop critical thinking.

Rubrics

- What is a rubric?
- Scoring tool that lists criteria for a piece of work.
 - Can be developed for many types of work.
- Indicates gradations of quality for each criteria.
- Criteria in one column and various degrees of quality in other columns.

Why Use Rubric?

- Helps define quality.

- Makes teacher expectations clear.
- Enhances student's ability to reach instructor expectations.
- Helps student accept responsibility to judge own work.
- Usually results in better papers.

Why Use Rubric?

- Good for teaching and assessment.
- Reduces time spent grading.
- Easier to explain grade.
- Provides informative feedback about strengths and areas needing improvement.
- Shows how to improve.
- Allows way to find problems with peer or self-review.

Designing Rubrics

- Helps instructor think about:
 - What is being taught.
 - What you expect students to learn.
- Describes level of quality for each criteria.
- Each level give meaning of required performance.

Characteristics of Good Rubric

- Acceptable criteria.
- Clear and concise.
- Point values listed.
- Assessing observable behaviors.
- Avoid unclear language.
 - “Creative”?
- Avoid unnecessarily negative language.

Plagiarism

- Define plagiarism for students.
- Go to writing department, see what they use.
- College policy?
- Library resources.
- More specific assignment, more difficult.