

English 1010 Assignment Sequences
Department of English and Literature
Utah Valley University

Paper #1: Thinking about Writing Communities

Purpose

An effective way to engage with the topic of writing is to consider how writing matters in various communities on a daily basis. This paper provides the chance to reflect in a personal way about a writing community you successfully joined by learning how to use the language and reasoning skills of that community. By using personal experiences and anecdotes, you will trace your movement from an outsider to an insider in a particular community. Examples of writing communities include a specific workplace, a sports team, a church community, a social or college club, a different country and language, a specific discussion forum--online or in-person.

Task

Write a 3-5 page personal narrative that explores a particular writing community that you are very familiar with and that you feel comfortable discussing with your peers. This writing community should be one that you have chosen, rather than one you were born into. Pick a clear writing community, explain and analyze the writing community's specific language practices and value system, and show readers that you have become a full member of this community by learning those language practices. Follow these specific steps:

1. Include a main point or take-away (thesis) in the beginning of your essay to clearly indicate to readers what the essay is about and what overall point you wish to make.
2. Identify the community's specific reasoning (logos), its values and emotions (pathos) and explain how you built your credibility (ethos) as a new community member.
3. Explain some of the tensions and limitations of this writing community: do some members demand or disapprove of certain language use?
4. Use what cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz calls "thick description" in your essay to identify a particular setting, mood, and people's characteristics (names, ages, etc.). Show, rather than tell, by using sensory details in your own writing that cue readers to visual, auditory, olfactory, tactile, and kinesthetic aspects.
5. Highlight one or two particular incidents (anecdotes) in which the community's language practices are nicely evident.
6. You may use quotes from individuals of this community, or from texts the community uses. Make sure to integrate such quotes into your essay.
7. Your audience are your peers and myself, your instructor. Thus, tailor the language of your essay to us, your real audience, and use a style that is distinctly your own.

How You Will Be Graded

The Thinking about Writing Communities essay will be graded according to the following criteria:

- 3-5 pages (double-spaced)
- Selection of an interesting and suitable community

- Analysis of writing community's language practices by concise and accurate identification of *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*
- Inclusion of specific anecdotes, using "thick description" to elaborate on events
- Evidence (in the form of examples/anecdotes) that support a clearly articulated main take-away (thesis)
- Use of persuasion and creativity to effectively convey the overall point
- Careful paragraph organization that creates cohesive overall structure
- Accuracy in formatting, grammar, spelling, and mechanics

Textbook Help

- "Introduction: Is Everyone an Author?" pp. xxix-xxxiv
- "Thinking Rhetorically," pp. 5-17
- "Writing a Narrative," pp. 186-228
- "Means of Persuasion: Emotional, Ethical, and Logical Appeals," pp. 421-432
- "Meeting the Expectations of Academic Writing," 35-49

Paper #2: Writing a Summary, Reviewing a Text

Purpose

An important element of studying language and improving our writing skills involves understanding texts and accurately informing others about what those texts mean. Reading critically and carefully is an essential skill for any strong writer. In addition, accurately summarizing someone else's arguments is equally important for a good writer. Thus, for this essay you will pick an audience of your choice and you will **summarize** for your audience a text by analyzing and mapping a writer's argument, understanding the specific details in a text, and informing your readers about the text's evidence and arguments. You will also **review** the same text by either recommending or not recommending the text to your readers.

Task

Write a 2-3 page essay in which you summarize and review a text, based on careful reading of the writer's argument. First, make sure you fully understand the writer's argument and all the details of the text. Then, summarize accurately and succinctly the writer's claims. Finally, conclude with your review and a recommendation for your audience. The point of this paper is not to simply agree or disagree with the author, but rather to use careful reading strategies to understand what a text is trying to convey. Then, you will evaluate the text for your own audience.

Include these specific steps:

1. Provide relevant information about the text, the author, and the subject.
2. Carefully read and break down a text so you fully understand its points and its structure.
3. Pick a specific audience to whom you wish to address your paper and pay attention to the audience's needs and expectations.
4. Include a main take-away (thesis) that indicates how your paper is structured and what it is about.
5. Carefully and accurately summarize the writer's main points and how exactly the writer argues and develops these main points. Explain the writer's logic (*logos*) and the sort of evidence, data, stories, or descriptions the writer uses.
6. Effectively integrate quotations, and paraphrase from the text into your own essay.
7. Include a clear review, or recommendation, of the text, as well as your criteria for the evaluation: do you want your readers to read the text, or do you find it is not worth their time? Why or why not? Support your recommendation with clear examples.
8. Be aware of the ethics of reviewing as you consider the effects of your judgments.
9. Feel free to include in your essay visual elements (color and graphics) to represent the text's argument: mapping the argument, creating a spider graph, an outline, or a visual representation of the text.

Assessment Criteria

- 2-3 pages (double-spaced)
- Inclusion of all relevant information about the text
- Summary reflects a close, accurate, and careful reading of the text
- Use of specific details from the text to support the review/evaluation

- Use of persuasion, creativity, and imaginative elements to directly engage the chosen audience
- Careful paragraph organization creates cohesive overall structure
- Accuracy in formatting, grammar, spelling, and mechanics

Textbook Help

“Writing a Review,” pp. 328-347

Paper #3: Analyzing a Text

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to better understand how various factors affect the ways authors craft their arguments. In this paper you will analyze the ways in which authors have considered the audience, purpose, stance, context, and medium/design when they constructed an article or essay. Learning to approach a text in this analytical way will help you better understand how complex texts are written and will familiarize you with using those strategies in your own persuasive writing.

Task

Write a 5-6 page analysis essay that discusses a particular text as assigned by your instructor. First, summarize the text's overall content and scope, and then offer a detailed, well-structured analysis of how the author has incorporated the needs of the intended audience, a specific purpose, a particular stance, a larger context, the demands of the genre and of the medium/design.

Follow these specific steps:

1. Provide relevant information about the text, the author, and the subject.
2. Include a main take-away (thesis) that indicates how your paper is structured and what it is about.
3. Use appropriate "evidence" for your textual analysis, including concrete details from the text and in-text citations.
4. Specifically analyze the text's "rhetorical situation:" genre, audience, purpose, stance, context, and medium/design.
5. Make sure your paper represents a fair and accurate summary of the text.
6. Use exact quotations and accurate paraphrases to support your claims.
7. Describe in detail what the text says and HOW exactly it says it.

How You Will Be Graded

- 5-6 pages (double-spaced)
- Analysis of the arguments presented by the text
- Focus on audience, purpose, stance, context, genre, and medium/design
- Use of specific examples, quotations and images
- Focused thesis statement supported by evidence
- Careful paragraph organization creates cohesive overall structure
- Accuracy in formatting, grammar, spelling, and mechanics

Textbook Help

"Thinking Rhetorically," pp. 5-17

"Rhetorical Situations," pp. 28-34

"Reading Rhetorically," pp. 67-78

Paper #4: Establishing the Facts

Purpose

In order to help us more fully understand the complexity of any given issue, this essay will focus on “stasis theory,” a concept and practice used by orators in ancient Greece. As Andrea Lunsford and her co-authors explain in our textbook, stasis theory “takes you to the heart of the argument” (419) by systematically identifying the overall facts (or the general state) about any interesting and relevant issues of our day. Stasis theory is a powerful method of inquiry because it generates a series of pertinent questions to gain a deeper sense of an issue’s complexity. This sort of analysis also allows you to understand the impasses in an argument--what’s at stake, where decisions need to be made, and how you can enter the conversation.

Task

Write a 5-7 page essay in which you perform a systematic analysis of an issue. In this way, you will analyze an argument and find a specific point of contention at which you can enter the conversation. Your paper will consist of TWO SECTIONS that are cohesively connected to each other:

1. Interrogate a single article that your instructor picked, performing an analysis of the issue presented in the article. Uncover “the facts” of this issue by presenting how the text addresses the following four questions:
 - What specific facts or data are relevant to the issue?
 - How can the issue be defined?
 - How much does it matter and why?
 - What actions should be taken?
2. From this analysis, identify an impasse--a moment of tension between what the author believes and what you believe. This tension will be an opportunity for you to enter the discussion by making a new claim. On which of the four questions do you disagree with the author? On which point would you want to intervene and offer an alternative view or claim? Locate another credible source, from the textbook, or the UVU Library Database about this point of contention. Then, offer your own position on the issue by making a new claim and supporting it with evidence from the second article.

Assume that the audience of your essay is academic--your peers, your professor, and other college-educated readers. Adjust your tone and stance to effectively engage this audience.

How You Will Be Graded

- 5-7 pages (double-spaced)
- Analysis of and commentary on an issue according to the directions above
- Overall point of scope of paper is presented in the introduction (thesis)
- Use of two sections (that are roughly equal in length): (1) “the facts” about first article and (2) your own position supported by second article
- Second part of paper includes an argument: claims are supported with credible evidence
- Careful paragraph organization creates cohesive overall structure
- Accuracy in formatting, grammar, spelling, and mechanics

Textbook Help

“What’s at Stake,” pp. 419-421

“Analyzing and Constructing Arguments,” pp. 405-451

“Strategies for Supporting an Argument,” pp. 451-474

Reflection Essay

Purpose

At the end of the writing process, it is always beneficial to reflect on your own terms about what you have written and the process that allowed you to complete each task. This semester, you were asked to analyze a number of texts and to write in a variety of genres. You also learned useful rhetorical skills that you can employ in your writing in other classes. This short essay presents an opportunity to recall your triumphs and struggles, your writing process and finished projects, and your overall learning gains in the course.

Task

Write a 2-3 page reflection essay to your instructor to reflect on your experience as an English 1010 student. You may want to consider more carefully and critically why writing matters to you as a university student. In addition, you may want to address your future goals as a writer. How will you continue to hone and practice different writing skills? Follow these specific steps in your reflection letter:

1. As a way of introducing your reflection essay, think about your writing process by completing the following statements with at least two additional explanatory sentences:
 - a. “I believe writing is...”
 - b. “I believe revising is....”
 - c. “I believe that writing courses are...”
2. In the rest of the letter to your instructor, address some of the following questions (you do not need to cover all of them):
 - **Review** each major assignment in your portfolio. What are the strengths and weaknesses? Which is your strongest piece of writing? Explain why it is the best and how it demonstrates what you have learned in this course. Which assignment is the weakest, and how would you change it if you could?
 - **Analyze** your writing process. Study your drafts, notes, and discussions on Canvas. Look at peer feedback responses. How did they help you revise? What was most helpful? What was not helpful, and why? Which of your instructor’s comments and suggestions were most helpful?
 - **Describe** your writing process. What strategies have been most helpful?
 - **Reflect** on your work as an author. What are you good at? What kind of writing do you like the most, and why? What kinds of writing do you struggle with, and why?
 - **Define** your goals. What have your writing assignments helped you understand about yourself as a writer? What do you want to work on in the future?

How You Will Be Graded

- 2-3 pages (double-spaced)
- Demonstration that you have thought carefully about your writing and your writing process

- Thorough consideration of writing and revision process, including instructor/peer feedback
- Claims are supported with evidence from personal experience in this class
- Reflection demonstrates your writing ability
- Careful paragraph organization creates cohesive overall structure
- Accuracy in formatting, grammar, spelling, and mechanics,

Textbook Help

“Reflecting on Your Writing,” p. 812