

Learning outcomes:

Participants will be able to

1. Describe the elements of effective written communication.
2. Contrast analytic writing forms from narrative structures.
3. Locate mentor texts that match to aspects of effective writing (namely, word choice, organization, and sentence structure.)
4. Explain how close reading aids in “reading like a writer.”
5. Evaluate published writers’ words and use of phrases.



Grading summary:

- A 90-100
- B 80-89
- C 70-79
- D 60-69

Note: “Plus” and “minus” are the two high and low end percentages for each grade range.

Summary of Requirements, Points, and Due Dates:

Requirement	Points
Introduction assignment	5
Personal writing with mentor texts (Choose one from five selections)	10
3 Discussion postings + 1 Reply (Choose any 3 from the 4 options)	30
Analytic Writing Showcase	30
Word collections	15
Final paper	10

→**Evaluation of Assignments and APA format:** As a graduate student you are expected to submit high quality written products that adhere to the requirements outlined by the 6th edition of the American Psychological Association (APA) publication manual. A helpful resource follows:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

For the purposes of our class, only the final paper needs to be in APA formatting.



→Submit an Assignment on Moodle

1. Links to assignments can always be found in the sections down the center of the Moodle course page.
2. Click the link to the assignment.
3. Click Add submission.
4. To enter online text, type directly into the Online text box.
5. To submit a file using drag-and-drop.
6. Browse for a file.
7. Click Upload.

DESCRIPTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. INTRODUCTORY ASSIGNMENT (5 points)

Write an introductory essay that (1) describes you, your teaching experience (and your family, if you wish), (2) shares the writing you do as part of your job, and (3) describes 2-3 course goals you have the concern writing improvement—either for yourself as a teacher or for students. Upload this introduction to the assignment folder, found under Topic 1.

2. PERSONAL WRITING WITH MENTOR TEXT(S) (10 points): Study the options provided in the list below (taken from *Write Like This* by teacher Kelly Gallagher) and choose one. Foreground your choice, telling *why* you selected this particular option—what “grabbed you” as you surveyed these assignment choices. A short paragraph will suffice. The composition itself should be 250-400 words. Remember to identify the word count of your response to one of the five choices below.

- My favorite mistake (pp. 29-35)
- A favorite (neighborhood) spot (p. 35-36)
- What my childhood tasted like (pp. 44-45)
- Childhood games (pp. 45-46)
- A hard moment or watermark event (pp. 46-49)

2. DISCUSSIONS/ONLINE PARTICIPATION (30 points)

This course is facilitated with the Moodle learning platform, and your “attendance and participation” in the online environment will be determined by your engagement with discussions, a minimum of 3, each worth 10 points. Additionally, reply to at least one class member’s posting.

To earn full credit for this discussion component:

- Read the discussion assignment description file that is provided in Moodle. Note: The discussion forum icon is a set of blue and green conversation boxes, found at the top of the course home page, under the blue heading: GENERAL.
- Meet content and word count requirements. At least 300 words for original postings; at least 200 words for reply postings. Postings must show evidence that you’ve read the texts/course material.

3. WORD COLLECTIONS (15 points)

This assignment is an opportunity to pay attention to how writers use words in powerful ways. We know that good writers pay attention to language use; accordingly, we want to heighten our awareness of words. Consider this: When you read something that gives you pause and makes you take notice, the author has achieved his/her goal in communicating effectively with you, the reader. Often it is not just a word or two, but how the entire sentence is structured.

To complete this assignment, become a word detective. Read pp. 41-44 in *Beyond the Five-Paragraph Essay*. Keep a log of interesting words and/or phrases that you encounter in your daily reading. Minimum number of examples: 15.



The ubiquity of beautiful prose is evident across all types of reading material from fiction to nonfiction and from short bits to lengthy pieces. For example, within the last year, I have read Jon Krakauer's *Into Thin Air* and *Into the Wild*. He's most adept at word choice, and I often learn words. Make it your goal to expand your speaking and writing vocabulary with the discovery of powerful word choice. Find your own sources of quality writing and have fun with this assignment! A detailed example is found in a pdf. file under Topic 3: **Assignment 3: Word Collections**.

4. WRITING SHOWCASE (30 points)

This assignment is designed to improve your instruction in analytical writing: making an argument, writing to inform, and writing to explain. With each of the three assignments you structure, also do it yourself as an example you might share with your students. As you create each modeled example, focus on clarity and organization of ideas, word choice, word economy (see p. 185 in Campbell/Latimer text), language specificity, sentence structure, and rhetorical devices. See the pdf. file provided under Topic 7 that offers two examples of how former students completed this assignment.

Use teaching ideas from our authors, Kelly Gallagher, Kimberly Campbell, and Kristi Latimer, and identify the mentor text(s) you are using to help guide your students. For example, you might like the Look Closely writing exercise, described on pp. 86-87 in *Write Like This*, where the teacher uses Frank Serfini's series of Looking Closely books as mentor texts to foreground a writing assignment.

Another way to think about this assignment...

You might already teach literary analysis but want to bump up this assignment, given what you now know from our readings. Accordingly, you would describe the assignment (and your plans for upgrading it.) Note: Chapter 3 in Campbell/Latimer text is particularly helpful. The authors provide examples of assignments that focus on character development, the role of setting, how theme is developed, and the use of symbolism and motifs. While their examples are with high school texts, for example, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, you can adapt their ideas to fit your grade level and curriculum.

Summary of your task:

- Create/design three analytic writing assignments.
- Identify the mentor texts you are using.
- Include a detailed assignment description.
- Complete the assignment yourself.
- Prepare as one docx file.
- Submit by the end of the term.

5. FINAL PAPER (10 points)

Write a paper that traces what you've learned about the composition process and how teachers help develop students' writing skills. Suggested length: 4-6 pages, d.s.

APPENDIX A

DISCUSSION REQUIREMENTS AND PROTOCOL

Original/initial posting requirements

1. There is a sense in the posting that ideas lead to each other and connections are being made. The original posting is not just a summary, but an attempt by the writer to push toward personal meaning AND is based on required readings.
2. Material is cited correctly with author and page number.
3. The initial post meets the length specification (at least 300 words.)
4. There are no distracting English language conventions that would interfere with the meaning the writer wants to convey and the meaning the reader is seeking.

Reply requirements

1. The reply posting is not merely commentary or "I agree with you" type of (passive thinking) response; it is not a casual entry as if in a blog. Instead, there is evidence of higher-level thinking. The reply incorporates ideas from the readings.
2. Each reply meets the length specification (at least 200 words.)
3. There are no distracting English language conventions that would interfere with the meaning the writer wants to convey and the meaning the reader is seeking.

Adapted from: Worcester Polytechnic Institute. (2010) Academic Technology Center: Teaching with technology collaborator. Retrieved June 28, 2010 from <http://www.wpi.edu/Academics/ATC/Collaboratory/Idea/gradingdiscussions.html>

Discussions Rubric

Full credit/10 points = All requirements met. Furthermore, contributions were particularly insightful.

Partial credit/5 points = Missing 1-2 requirements.

No credit/0 points = Missing discussion assignment.