Types of Writing Assignments

Writing to Learn (WTL)
This pedagogical approach values writing as a method of learning. When students write reactions to information received in class or in reading, they often comprehend and retain the information better. Writing can also help students work through confusing new ideas and apply what they learn to their own lives and interests. Also, because students write more frequently, they become more comfortable with writing and are able to maintain or even improve upon their writing skills. WTL assignments are typically short and informal and can be performed either in or out of class. Examples include writing and reading journals, summaries, response papers, learning logs, problem analyses, and more.

Writing in the Disciplines (WID)
This approach recognizes that each discipline has its own unique language conventions, format, and structure. In other words, the style, organization, and format that is acceptable in one discipline may not be at all acceptable in another. WID believes that to participate successfully in the academic discourse of their community, students must be taught discipline-specific conventions and should practice using these conventions. Some common WID assignments are reports, literature reviews, project proposals, and lab reports. WID assignments can also be combined with WTL activities to help students think through key concepts, ideas, and language of in their disciplines.

NOTE: Writing to Learn assignments tend to be low-risk assignments while Writing in the Disciplines assignments tend to be high-risk.

Steps for Revision

Step ONE: Paper is assigned.

Step TWO: Student proposes a topic.

Step THREE: Student brings in required sources.

Step FOUR: Student completes and brings in an outline.

Step FIVE: Student completes a thesis statement and brings in a first draft.

Step SIX: Peer review (preferably one week before the due date so as to allow time for corrections).

Step SEVEN: Student has a conference with the instructor and/or a writing specialist to discuss

corrections.

Step EIGHT: Paper is turned in.

NOTE: These steps are meant to help revise assignments. Not all assignments will require the same amount of revision. Steps can be added, repeated, and/or omitted depending on how low-risk or high-risk an assignment is, as well as on the difficulty (or lack thereof) a student might be having with the assignment. The amount of time allotted between steps will also depend on the assignment, as well as on the specific course's structure.

Sample Grading Criteria Low-Risk

Criteria	A (90-100)	B (80-89)	C (70-79)	D (60-69)	F (60 or below)
Prompt	Thoroughly answered the prompt in the allotted time	Answered the prompt but not as thoroughly as desired	Barely answers the prompt	Does not answer the prompt fully. Does not utilize the allotted time effectively	Did not answer prompt. Did not utilize time effectively. Prompt was not turned in.
Writing	Virtually free of misspellings, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, wrong word choices, and other errors	Few misspellings, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, wrong word choices, and other errors	Has misspellings, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, wrong word choices, and other errors	Many misspellings, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, wrong word choices, and other errors	So many misspellings, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, wrong word choices, and other errors that is hard to read

Sample Grading Criteria

Criteria	A (90-100)	B (80-89)	C (70-79)	D (60-69)	F (60 or below)
Purpose	Clearly and effectively communicates the paper's purpose	Communicates the paper's purpose	Maintains the paper's purpose	The purpose of the paper is not clear or is lost due to other errors	The paper does not have a purpose or the paper's purpose is not consistent with the assignment
Thesis	Clearly presented in the first or second paragraph	Presented in the first or second paragraph	There is a thesis but the reader may have a hard time finding it	The thesis is not clear	The paper lacks a thesis
Body Paragraphs and organization	Offer support for the thesis; ideas are clear and follow each other logically and effortlessly	Paragraphs contribute to the development of the thesis	Paragraphs contribute to the thesis but their organization is less than clear	Individual paragraphs may have interesting ideas but they do not work together well in support of the thesis	Body paragraphs do not support the thesis
Conclusion	Pulls essay together and demonstrates how the essay as a whole has supported the thesis	Pulls essay together and demonstrates that the essay has supported the thesis	Summarizes essay without integrating the ideas presented into a unified support for the thesis	The essay is difficult to understand due to its lack of cohesion or unity	The essay lacks a clear conclusion
Writing	Essay is virtually free of misspellings, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, wrong word choices, and other errors	Essay may have a few instances of misspellings, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, wrong word choices, and other errors	Essay has instances of misspellings, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, wrong word choices, and other errors	Essay has many instances of misspellings, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, wrong word choices, and other errors	Essay has so many instances of misspellings, sentence fragments, run-on sentences, comma splices, wrong word choices, and other errors that it is hard to understand