

# Writing to Learn: Learning to Write

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# Writing @ UWO

What is WAC?

Writing and assessment

WAC Assignments

Writing in the Disciplines

## 1. Writing Courses Available for all students



### Writing

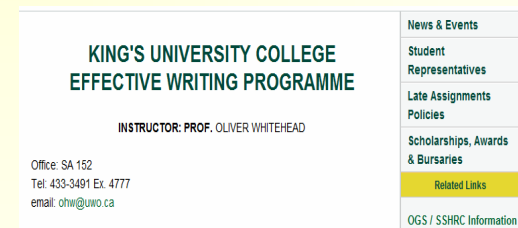
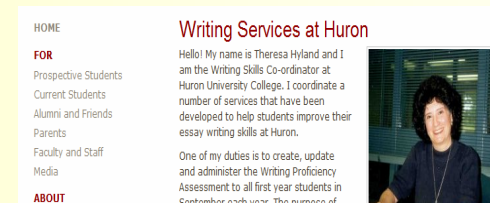
NOTE: Not all courses are offered every year. Please check the current course offerings.

#### 002F/G Introduction to Writing in English.

Restricted to English as a Second Language students. This course will introduce the grammar and structure of English as well as the conceptual and cultural conventions of university writing in English.

Antirequisite(s): Writing 001F/G.  
3 hours, half course.

## 2. Writing Centres



## 3. "E" courses

# What is Writing Across the Curriculum?

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- writing-to-learn activities are short, impromptu or otherwise informal writing tasks that help students think through key concepts or ideas presented in a course
- Based on learning to write research in 1960s-1970s in US/UK
- First programs emerged in 1980s

The WAC Clearinghouse, <http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/>

# WAC Philosophy

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- that writing is the responsibility of the entire academic community,
- that writing must be integrated across departmental boundaries,
- that writing instruction must be continuous during all four years of undergraduate education,
- that writing promotes learning, and
- that only by practicing the conventions of an academic discipline will students begin to communicate effectively within that discipline.

# Writing and Learning

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- writing plays an indispensable role in developing critical thinking skills, learning discipline-specific content, and understanding and building competence in the modes of inquiry and dissemination specific to various disciplines and professions

Georgia State WAC Program,  
[http://wac.gsu.edu/content/introduction/what\\_is\\_wac.shtml](http://wac.gsu.edu/content/introduction/what_is_wac.shtml)

# NSSE and Writing

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- To what extent had your experience at Western contributed to: Writing Clearly and effectively? Overall UWO score: 2.58/5
- To what extent had your experience at Western contributed to: Speaking clearly and effectively? Overall UWO score: 2.34/5

# WAC and Student Engagement

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- student engagement with the subject matter being taught increases significantly when they are more frequently asked to write about that subject, particularly in courses in their junior and senior years.

Richard J. Light. "Writing and Students' Engagement " *Peer Review* 6.1 (Fall 2003); 28-31.

# Good Writing Assignments

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- Tie the writing task to specific pedagogical goals.
- Note rhetorical aspects of the task, i.e., audience, purpose, writing situation.
- Make all elements of the task clear.
- Include grading criteria on the assignment sheet.
- Break down the task into manageable steps.

<http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/pop10a.cfm>



# Sample Writing to Learn Assignments

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Writing in the Disciplines

- The reading journal
- Generic and focused summaries
- Annotations
- Response papers
- Synthesis papers
- The discussion starter
- Focusing a discussion
- The learning log
- Analyzing the process
- Problem statement
- Solving real problems
- Pre-test warm-ups
- Using Cases
- Letters
- What counts as a fact?
- Believing and doubting game
- Analysis of events
- Project notebooks
- The writing journal

WAC Clearinghouse,  
<http://wac.colostate.edu/intro/pop5.cfm>

# WAC Strategies

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The University Writing Council @ UPEI

[WAC Strategies](#)

## Basic Tools and Techniques

The items listed below represent a small sample of easy-to-implement WAC tools.

- [The Quickwrite](#)
- [The "Good Question"](#)
- [The One-Minute Paper](#)
- [Summary and Précis Writing](#)
- [Role Playing](#)
- [Journals and Logs](#)

Updated: 20 September 2006

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Related Links

[http://www.upei.ca/uwc/wac/strategies/basic\\_tools.html](http://www.upei.ca/uwc/wac/strategies/basic_tools.html)

# What is Writing in the Disciplines?

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Writing in the disciplines focuses on instructing students in the language conventions of a discipline as well as with specific formats typical of a given discipline

# WID: Two Kinds

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1. "E" courses
2. Discipline-specific courses
  - Engineering Science 211
  - Writing 131F/G: Writing in the Sciences
  - Writing 121F/G: Writing for MIT
  - Management Communications

# Essay courses

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- A Western course may be designated as an essay course if it has a significant writing component (defined by Senate) involving written assignments (essays or other appropriate prose composition, excluding examinations) to demonstrate the student's competence in essay writing.

# Essay courses and Assessment

- Senate Committee on Academic Policy and Awards governs then through SUUPR
- Subcommittee on Undergraduate Program Review
- Applies the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents' assessment criteria for all undergraduate programs (OCAV)
- Item 4 of the 6 OCAV is "Communication Skills"

# Writing Intensive courses

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- WI courses incorporate revised assignments, sequenced assignments, peer review, and student assistance from a writing consultant. [Georgia State]

# Writing Intensive courses at Simon Fraser

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- A writing-intensive course is one in which writing is used as a tool for learning and developing understanding of subject matter and is taught as a means of communication in discipline-specific ways. Students are shown, rather than simply told, how to write in the genres most valued in the discipline and are given opportunities to use skilled feedback in the revision and rewriting of major papers.

<http://www.lidc.sfu.ca/teaching/writing/resources/W-CourseCriteria.php>