

Writing Class III

Instructor: Rob Whyte, D570, hours TBA

The purpose of this course is to help students improve their ability to write clear and interesting short passages, something more than a paragraph but less than an essay. The course will roughly be divided into two parts. The first half will focus on learning to write with lessons and activities that help students improve style, organisation and accuracy. The second half will focus on writing to learn. That will include practical skills like writing arguments as well as some business documents such as a short memo and properly formatted email. By the end of the course you will know how to describe, summarize and evaluate things and ideas with greater organisational elegance and precision.

Objectives

- Recall the eight parts speech by completing in class lessons and writing exercises.
- Compose faster by completing fluency exercises and other timed writing assignments.
- Define good writing by learning and applying the 6+1 writing traits.
- Demonstrate an ability to write and evaluate arguments by learning a specific sentence pattern and completing multiple assignments.
- Define inference and hypothesis and use them to create arguments by learning and using basic strategies and sentence patterns.
- Compose short reports and summaries with effective organisation and elements of style by learning to write compelling first sentence as well as specific sentence patterns taught in class (e.g. appositives, prepositional phrases and complex sentences).

Methods

Individual writing, reading assignments, short lectures and individual feedback. You will be writing in class every day. There will be some reading and writing homework. You will receive regular feedback which will help you improve your writing.

Materials

There is no textbook for this class. Sometimes, I will post materials on my website for the students to download and print. The website is www.eslwriting.org. Please check for updates regularly.

Exams

Students will be assessed on sentence fluency, the ability to discuss topical ideas and vocabulary. Interviews for the mid term exam and final exam.

Attendance 10%

Midterm 25%

Final exam 25%

Book report 10%

Two quizzes 20% (10% each)

Participation 10%

Other Points

The course methods and structure may change depending on student needs and abilities. At the end of the semester, please do not ask me to change your grade because you have a special situation. If you need a high score, work hard, study hard and come to every class on time ready to learn. Unless I made a calculation error, I will not change your final score. Every class, you will need four things: a writing tool (e.g. a pencil), two notebooks and a dictionary. Phone dictionaries are okay. Students who do not bring these learning tools to class will be marked absent.

Week 1

Introductions Week. What is good writing? Parts of speech review.

Week 2

Begin writing. Core knowledge. Before and after exercise. Parts of speech practice. Show me don't tell me idea. Descriptive writing - hot air balloon. Talk about book report.

Week 3

Elements of writing style. Compelling first sentences. Complex sentences. Paraphrase with synonyms as technique to improve self editing.

Week 4

Elements of writing style. Learn appositives. Timed writing fluency. Picture prompt for writing assignment. Talk about quiz.

Week 5

Quiz #1. Prepositional phrases. Paragraph editing.

Week 6

Elements of style and accuracy. Articles exercise. Elements of cohesion example. Return quiz. Complete final draft for all writing.

Week 7

Complete feedback. Review exam questions.

Week 8 - Midterm exam

Week 9

Writing to learn. What is an argument? Parallel structure. Picture prompt to write and evaluate the argument.

Week 10

What is an inference? Define inference. Make an argument from an inference. Book report writing in class.

Week 11

What is a hypothesis. Define hypothesis. Make an argument from a hypothesis. Summarise and evaluate an argument with video prompt. Discuss quiz #2 questions.

Week 12

Quiz 2. How to write a business email. Write an argument using data with email format.

Week 13 Business memo

Learn memo format. Data summary. Draw conclusion from data. Return quiz. Last day for new writing assignments.

Week 14

Review and prepare for final exam. Return final student writing.

Week 15 - Reading week

Week 16 - Final exam