

COMMON WRITING ASSIGNMENT 2001-2002

Your teacher has asked you to do some reading for your work in this class. For this assignment, please write an essay (1.5—2 pages) about one of the reading selections, introducing it and then commenting on it.

As you draft your essay, please follow these directions:

1. In your first paragraph, introduce the reading selection. Identify it by title and author, and summarize its main points in no more than 4 sentences. Then indicate briefly what interests you about the reading selection.
2. In the remaining paragraphs of the essay, present your own comments about the ideas in the reading selection. Here are some issues that you might choose to address:
 - Which points were especially effective and why? Explain.
 - What is your opinion about the idea/s presented discussed in the article? Give reasons to support your opinion.
 - What points would you like to add about the article's subject? Base your points on what you know from your studies or experience.
 - (Other question suggested by your teacher) _____

Whatever you decide to say, support your points by offering examples, additional facts, arguments, or comparisons with related situations.

3. Check to make sure that your essay a) demonstrates that you understand the reading selection and b) explores the connections between its main points and yours.
4. Prepare the paper following these directions:
 - Type, double-spaced, using a font no smaller than 11 and no larger than 14.
 - **Do not type your name** on the essay. Type your Banner number instead.*
 - Use the spell-checker, and proofread before you save your final draft.
 - Print two copies of the essay.
 - Write your name at the top of one copy and give it to your teacher for grading.
 - Fill out the form on the back of this page and staple it to the other (unsigned) copy of the essay. Give it to your teacher, who will pass it on to the program assessment committee. This second reading is not related to evaluation of either you or your teacher. It is simply to help us to assess our program.

* Your Banner number will be used temporarily to help us identify your past writing activities at this college, and then it will be removed permanently. All information that the assessment committee saves will be totally anonymous.

**COMMON WRITING ASSIGNMENT RECORD
2001-2002**

Banner number _____ Date _____

Course name _____ Section # _____

What program are you enrolled in? _____

What other CCC course(s) have you taken in which you wrote one or more essays over a page in length? _____

How many times have you consulted a writing tutor in the Learning Center? _____

What did you like or dislike about writing this paper? _____

Thank you for helping with our research into ways of improving our programs.

* * * * *

First reader, circle holistic score: 4 3 2 1 0

Check boxes for analytical results:

Score	A Purpose/Audience	B Organization	C Development	D Language
4 <i>Superior</i>				
3 <i>Proficient</i>				
2 <i>Essential</i>				
1 <i>In progress</i>				

Second reader, circle holistic score: 4 3 2 1 0

Check boxes for analytical results:

Score	A Purpose/Audience	B Organization	C Development	D Language
4 <i>Superior</i>				
3 <i>Proficient</i>				
2 <i>Essential</i>				
1 <i>In progress</i>				

Third (if necessary) reader, circle holistic score: 4 3 2 1 0

Check boxes for analytical results:

Score	A Purpose/Audience	B Organization	C Development	D Language
4 <i>Superior</i>				
3 <i>Proficient</i>				
2 <i>Essential</i>				
1 <i>In progress</i>				

NOTES TO PARTICIPATING TEACHERS

The purpose of this project is to find out how our students' writing skills are related to their academic histories as recorded in Banner (number of credits taken, completion of writing courses, developmental or ESL history, etc.). What we learn will help us design better support for the improvement of student writing throughout the college. We're collecting results in the aggregate, selected randomly and anonymously, with no interest in identifying individual students, classes or instructors. We're looking at patterns.

The method is to ask instructors to embed a common writing assignment into a class where it would fit naturally and contribute to the ongoing work. Instructors will differ in the ways they use the paper for grading or instruction, but they'll collect a second copy of the paper, this one anonymous, for submission to the assessment team. The notes below describe the process in more detail.

- Please identify a reading selection for students to work with. The reading can be about anything related to the themes or content of your class as long as the ideas are developed in paragraph form. Articles, short stories, case studies, reports, and promotional materials are some possibilities. If you'd like to adapt the assignment to respond to an event or other non-reading source of information, a member of the Assessment Implementation Team would be glad to consult with you.
- Give students no more than a week and a half to prepare the paper. Please go over the directions with the students to be sure they all understand the assignment. Please urge them to complete the information on the back of the assignment sheet so that we can assess our college services fully.
- Don't provide comments on first drafts or assign revision as a formal activity before the samples are submitted. This is to level the field so that all students are relying on their usual writing processes. If they're in the habit of getting help from tutors or friends and revising on their own, that's fine, but don't make it a scheduled class activity until after the anonymous sample has been submitted to the assessment team.
- The students should give you two copies of the paper: one for you to grade in any way that fits your plans for your class, and an anonymous one (attached to the report sheet) for you to set aside for the assessment project. (Directions for paper preparation are included in the assignment.) From that stack of anonymous papers, pick 6 randomly (by alphabetical order, by Banner #, by shuffling, or by any randomizing system that you choose) and give them to Evelyn Farbman by the end of March.

Thank you for participating in the project. This year's results will not only help us to analyze our the writing needs of our current student cohort, but will provide a baseline against which we can later measure our progress as we try to address those needs.