



Tips on Writing for Advanced English Classes

From the Illinois Wesleyan Writing Center

Getting Started:

- Do you understand the type of writing assignment? For example: is it a formal research paper? A creative writing piece? Or a speech?
- If you do not understand, Go to your professor's office hours for clarification.

Visiting your Professor:

- Visit them virtually or in-person during their office hours.
- OR
- Email her, him, or them if you cannot make it to their office hours. Offer a range of availability and let them know what topic you will be asking questions regarding.

Reading sources is a great way to improve your writing by finding what you like to read, considering how you'd like to sound, and examining who makes their points the most successfully.

Research:

If your assignment requires research, keep in mind the following:

- Analyze your research. What have you learned from reading it?
- Look at your research to consider if you've planned a coherent argument.
 - Is your writing in conversation with relevant literature and major issues surrounding the topic?

Remember: you can get wonderful support from the librarians if you feel like you need more evidence.

The Writing Process:

Here are some useful tips for while you're writing:

- Take breaks between drafts
- Start with an outline so you can make your writing coherent
 - Look for quotations from the literary text that you're going to want to be sure to incorporate.

The Editing Process:

As you look through your writing once you've completed (most of) a draft, consider the following:

- Is your line of argument/ analysis clear? Is it addressing the prompt/ question your professor has shared? Are you allowing space for complexities and the implications of your response?
- Is your analysis sophisticated in the sense that you have come up with your own response (but has properly cited the information of others)?

Further Advice

Getting Started

- Underline the words in the prompt that seem most important.
 - How has your professor explained these concepts, ideas, or terms to you in the past? Make notes in the prompt's margin or on a blank page of notebook paper to make sure to address these areas in your paper.
- Reread (a summary of) the text to make sure you understand it before moving to next steps. (Only read a summary if it's from a trustworthy source.)
- Understand what the prompt is asking you to do. Are you crafting an argument about the reading(s)? Are you evaluating a theme or aspect of the reading? What does your professor expect?

Visiting Your Professor

- If you email your professor to set up a meeting, make sure you refer to them by name and with a greeting. Use the name they have indicated a preference for in class: Hi Dr. X; Hello Magneto; etc. (We also have an email etiquette handout available on our website).
- Most departments keep their professors' and staff office hours online. If you are unsure when your professor holds office hours, check there, Moodle, and the syllabus before emailing them to find out when they're available.
- When you email them, list your availability. Be generous with your time if you can.

Research

- Make use of all of our relevant [tools](#) at Ames Library. Don't just do a Google Scholar search or select the first result. Dig into the material to find what will best support your analysis.
- Schedule a consultation with one of our librarians. Meet with them to create the best list of resources that you can.
- Keep a works cited, references, or bibliography page going as you research. That way, you won't have to go on the hunt for the resources you liked later.
 - Use the permalink option to always have a link to any e-sources. Use paperclips or write down page numbers for print sources.

The Writing and Editing Processes

- Don't try to edit as you write. Just focus on getting your ideas out. You can edit afterwards.
- When you take breaks between drafts, do something entirely unrelated to your paper. You need to reset.
 - We also have lots of resources on our website about the writing and editing process.
- Visit a writing center tutor for help and support. We can give you guidance to make your writing stronger.
- If you're a procrastinator, visit the Student Success Tutors for support and suggestions to avoid putting things off until the last minute. Get the best start you can on your work.

Resources for Support

- Your Writing Center Tutors: iwu.mywconline.com
- Your Ames Librarians: <https://www.iwu.edu/library/>