Sample Assignments For English 1101

English 1101 Sample Assignment 1
Examining Yourself as a Writer

Please write a short essay (3-4 pages, double-spaced) describing yourself as a writer. View yourself through two lenses: first, describe how you move through your own writing process; then, tell me how you see yourself as a writer, in terms of your past (hindrances, disappointments, challenges, successes, fluency) and future (improvements, plans, goals). Although I will serve as your primary audience, your classmates will become part of your audience as well. Your purpose is to examine your writing self truthfully and then describe the results of that examination to me and your classmates. The context for this assignment is our writing course, but the assignment will serve to provide you and me with a current snapshot of you as a writer. Where you are – and where you’re going – as a writer is important to your success in this course.

I am interested in your view of yourself as a writer, but I realize that your development as a reader may play an important part in your development as a writer. Feel free to interweave important moments in your reading history as well, if doing so strengthens your essay.

The following questions (or prompts) may help with the invention of your essay, but they won’t help you much with the organization (or arrangement). Therefore, I advise you to freewrite responses to each of the prompts, re-read what you’ve written, and then strategize an effective arrangement. Many students feel more comfortable as chronological writers, but that organizational pattern may not be the best one for you. Organizing your material emphatically, for instance, might be more effective.

1. How do you go about understanding the writing assignment?
2. How do you typically prepare for a writing assignment? Describe the steps you take, including rereading the assignment, asking questions about it, talking to instructors or friends, jotting down ideas, gathering information, and so on. How far in advance of the due date do you usually begin working on the assignment?
3. What is your ideal place to write? Would it be solitary and silent or noisy and crowded or just a little of both? Describe the places you’ll actually be doing your writing for this course, and then discuss their suitability for you.
4. Describe your typical drafting or writing process. Do you finish a draft in one sitting, or do you need to take breaks? When you get stuck, what do you do to get moving again? Is your process efficient? Are there specific steps you could take to improve your efficiency? What does revising mean to you? Do you ever revise, and if so, what specifically do you do when you revise (insert, delete, move around information, check punctuation; proofread for typos and misspellings)? Why do you revise (or not revise)?
5. Finally, how do you respond to the evaluation of your writing? What do you read first – the grade itself or the teacher’s comments? Do you want an explanation for your grade immediately, or do you understand how you earned that grade? Do you refer back to your teacher’s comments or previous assignments as you work on your current assignments?

English 1101 Sample Assignment 2

The Rhetorical Analysis

A Rhetorical Situation calls for the use of rhetoric, or speech-making, oratory, a situation where argument would be appropriate. A rhetorical situation identifies the interaction between writers and readers or speakers and listeners in relation to a particular issue and refers to the set of elements involved in any act of communication: the writer/speaker, the audience, the purpose, the occasion, and the topic.
For this essay (3-4 pages double-spaced), apply your rhetorical ability in two ways: as a reader and as a writer. To that end, select an editorial or opinion piece that takes a stand on an issue related to the literature we’ve read for this class. Whether you choose an essay on issues of race, equality, patriotism, prejudice, gender, animal rights, depression, family responsibility, or any other issue connected with the literature, look for an argument that you find rhetorically interesting in terms of the ways the writer uses words or strategy (method of appeal, arrangement of evidence, emphasis or de-emphasis of information, etc.). For instance, the essay could be an eloquently expressed position with which you agree, one you haven’t given much thought to, or one with which you disagree. Even if you don’t yet have a clear position, the writer of the work you’re reading should take a definite stance on the issue under consideration. For this reason, a news story reporting on or describing a dispute will not work for this assignment.

Unless you specify otherwise, the audience for your essay will be first-year writers at Georgia State University. You should not assume that your readers are familiar with the work you have chosen to analyze, but you should assume that your readers are familiar with the issue as discussed in class. Please remember to attach a copy of the essay you’re analyzing. Your purpose is to analyze the essay and describe its strengths and weaknesses in terms of its appropriateness to the rhetorical situation and the use of artistic appeals (pathos, logos, ethos). Therefore, part of your task is to review briefly the contents of the essay you’re analyzing (particularly the claim or proposition advanced by the author) and to suggest to your audience that they, too, should be interested in the issue and the author’s treatment of it.

But fulfilling the preceding obligations of the assignment are not enough; you are expected to explain the reasons for the (in)effectiveness of the author’s treatment of the issue at hand in ways that help your readers see how the writer’s argument works (or doesn’t work). By examining the rhetorical strategies a writer has adopted, you can make inferences about what that writer has attempted to do, why he/she is saying specific things to a particular audience, why she is speaking in a particular way, and how he/she wants the audience to respond. Thus to fulfill your purpose, you’ll want to establish a thesis statement, a generalization about the rhetorical strategies of the text, and demonstrate to your audience that your generalization is a reasonable one. To that end, you will employ every rhetorical strategy within the range of your abilities.

The following questions should help you generate the material you need for planning, inventing, and drafting your rhetorical analysis:

1. What is the rhetorical situation of the essay? Who’s the writer’s audience? What’s his/her purpose? What issue is at stake? For what specific context was the rhetoric composed? How did the context affect the writer’s use of the artistic appeals? Of specific evidence, support, or details? How does the writer respond to, show awareness of, or resolutely ignore other positions on the issue?
2. How does the writer establish his/her ethos (good will, good sense, good moral character)? How does he/she establish common ground with her readers? Consider two kinds of evidence for your answers; overt statements and the attitudes implied through tone, style, and choice of evidence.
3. How does the writer employ logos (claims, supporting ideas and evidence, implicit assumptions) to (appear to) deliver a rational argument?
4. How does the writer employ pathos (emotions and values) in order to identify his/her cause with the interests of his/her reader? How does he/she connect emotionally with his/her readers?
5. How is the essay organized? What is the thesis statement? How do the supporting paragraphs follow from that thesis? How are the supporting paragraphs themselves arranged: chronologically, spatially, or emphatically? Does the writer use transition words to enhance the movement of the argument?
6. How well is the thesis statement supported? The (implicit or explicit) topic sentence of each paragraph?
7. How does the writer use specific words, phrases, sentence structure, or paragraph lengths to establish a tone? What is that tone? Is it appropriate?

In arranging this essay, you may wish to pursue one of these two basic strategies:
1. The play-by-play approach, in which you follow the structure of the text, presenting commentary as you go.
This approach is very practical, but its dangers are paraphrase and lost focus.

2. The topical approach, in which you follow out relationships between the questions, or structure your discussion around a few carefully chosen examples, the order depending on the particular point you want to lead up to. This approach has structural dangers, and it is harder, but it also offers you more freedom.

English 1101 Sample Assignment 3

Reporting Information: Multi-Voiced Draft

“I will try to publish nothing about any book or article until I have understood it, which is to say, until I have reason to think that I can give an account of it that the author will recognize as just.”

—Wayne C. Booth

Now that you’ve gathered your sources and summarized them using the rhetorical précis, you can begin drafting your essay. All writing is a process of reforming others’ ideas, our own experience with these ideas, and our own experience. We see traces of these ideas or experiences when we refer to them, but in some writing, the reader may not know the source of our ideas. However, in writing to report information, we emphasize others’ ideas rather than our own. And in academic writing, you must show where you got your ideas and the source of the material you’re using. We do this because academic readers are interested in how you came to hold the views you do; academic writing details your thinking on a subject. Crucial to writing about another’s ideas, though, is being able to understand them. Thus, early drafts are often very writer-centered—we’re trying to understand and figure out our ideas. To facilitate that process, complete the following on at least one of your sources. Then, write a multi-voiced draft of your paper (guidelines will follow).

Step 1 (can be handwritten):

1. Go back through the selection and highlight words you didn’t know. List them, look up the unfamiliar words in the dictionary, and define them (only the definitions for this particular usage).
2. Highlight passages that you didn’t understand. Re-read them after defining words. Draw a line down the center of your notebook paper. On the left hand side, make notes about the dictionary or literal meaning of the words and passage. On the right hand side, generate possible meanings for the passage given the context of the essay.
3. Re-read the essay and your other sources. Add to your notes about the possible meaning of the passages.

Step 2 (word processed):

Write a multi-voiced first draft of your paper. First, create a Works Cited page (Harbrace Ch.11, especially 11a3, p. 292+ and sample p. 323). For each entry, use a different color font. Choose a font color for yourself and use it for the heading of your paper. Write an introduction and conclusion in your own words, in your own font. Decide how you want to organize the material you’ve gathered. Will you divide your subject into parts, examining parts in various paragraphs? Will you describe causes or effects of your topic in various paragraphs? Will you compare your topic to similar topics? Will you describe the process involved in your topic?

Next, draft the body of the paper, switching font color every time you shift to another’s voice. Include the author’s name and page number (Lamb 12), but if you’re not sure of the form, don’t worry. You can look this up later (Harbrace ch. 11a1–2). Feel free to be very “chatty” in this first draft. As you include information, discuss your reaction to the material, reasons for including it, etc. You’ll revise your paper later to become more reader-friendly. Remember, you’ll be primarily reporting, so there will be lots of others’ font colors.

English 1101 Sample Assignment 4

Writing to Explore Experience

Purpose and Topic:
Your purpose is to explore and understand a facet of your life, or as Itabari Njeri writes, “to impose order on the chaos of memory” (68), in order to help others understand this experience. Remember, you must have some distance from this experience to write about its meaning effectively. Choose from the following topics:

- why others see you the way they do or why they nicknamed you or called you what they did
- why a parent, caregiver, or relative is the way he or she is
- why your engage in a certain behavior
- why you love a favorite possession, article of clothing, etc.
- why you said or did something you regret (or didn’t do or say something you regret); a time when you were forbidden or expected to do something because of your gender

Tips for the Process:
Re-read class notes and essays; freewrite, journal, and use brainstorming techniques from Motives. Consult family photo albums, re-read old journals, letters, and memorabilia to find ideas. Share your ideas and emerging drafts with peers, classmates, and the tutors in the writing center.

Evidence:
Use plenty of description to illustrate your experience. Rely on narration to tell us what happened. Feel free to quote from the essays if they’re relevant. Be creative about using dialogue and details from your past (hint: you may take poetic license to fill in details you may have forgotten).

Arrangement (Organization):
Using description and narration, arrange your ideas so we can understand your experience. Be sure to indicate the time and sequence of events clearly. Consider variations on chronological order, but be sure to save an effective scene for the end.

Clarity/Readability/Delivery:
Write with your audience (well-disposed, intelligent adults) in mind, striving for Standard English and effective style. Make sure you’ve moved from the writer-based prose of early drafts to reader-based prose for delivery. Type your essay following MLA format. Turn in a complete, typed draft on Thurs., Sept. 11, and bring an extra copy for peer review. Bring a revised copy for peer review on Tues., Sept. 16. Turn in your complete essay with revised drafts and peer review sheets in class on Thursday, Sept. 18.

English 1101 Sample Assignment 5

Writing to Report Information

Purpose and Topic:
What are you curious about? We report information when we want to understand an issue and share this understanding with others, often in order to illustrate dangers or a new understanding. Thus, your purpose in paper 2 is to learn about a topic and explain it to others. You’ll concentrate on describing the facts, processes, and background of your topic rather than interpreting, persuading, proposing, or analyzing. Choose a topic you like since you’ll write about it again in Paper 3. For your audience, imagine college students like you who would like to learn more about this subject who are reading a particular magazine or website for information. Possible topics include:
Tips for the Process:
Re-read class notes and essays; freewrite, journal, and use brainstorming techniques from Motives. Consult Motives (102-104) and Harbrace Ch. 8 for how to find sources. You’ll write a précis for each of your sources, keep a reading journal, and turn in a multi-voiced draft in which each different voice (including your own) is a different color font. You’ll have specific instructions later regarding your drafts. Share your ideas and emerging drafts with peers, classmates, and the tutors in the writing center.

Evidence:
You may build on the experience you wrote about in paper 1 or start on a new topic, but include what you already know about the subject. Then, use a variety of sources to help you learn—web sites, interviews, magazine articles, essays in Motives, newspaper articles, or books. Use at least one source accessed through Galileo (see your Pullen library supplement).

Arrangement (Organization):
Your organization should help the reader follow your ideas. Consider the guidelines of quantity, quality, relevance, and manner as you select and organize your material.

Clarity/Readability/Delivery:
Write with your audience (well-disposed, intelligent adults) in mind, striving for Standard English and effective style. Make sure you’ve moved from the writer-based prose of early drafts to reader-based prose for delivery. Type your essay following MLA format. All your précis and multi-voiced drafts are due Thursday, Oct. 9 (two copies). A complete draft of the final is due Tuesday, Oct. 14 for editing. Turn in your complete essay with revised drafts and peer review sheets in class on Thursday, Oct. 16.

English 1101 Sample Assignment 6
Writing to Evaluate

Purpose and Topic:
We evaluate every day when we decide which products to buy, which clothes to wear, and which courses to take. Evaluation means judging the quality, worth, merit, or importance of something. Written evaluations include job ratings, consumer reports, movie reviews, restaurant reviews, scholarly articles, editorials, and book reviews. These evaluations help readers decide whether or not to use the product or read the book. Sometimes written evaluations help others see how a new book might contribute to their understanding of an issue or topic and if they’d like to read it. You’ll write such a review of Nickel and Dimed; this review might appear in the Signal or other newspaper. Thus, your purpose is to evaluate what the book contributed to your
understanding of poverty so that others can decide the book’s worth and whether or not to read it.

**Tips for the Process:**

Study the essays we’ve read in *Motives* for approaches and rhetorical strategies. Read and take careful notes on the book. Think about your criteria and components you’ll use; develop these in your journal. Decide on passages you want to include, and do some summaries, paraphrases, and quotations. Come to class on Dec. 2 ready to draft. Share your ideas and emerging drafts with peers, classmates, and the tutors in the writing center.

**Evidence:**

Include plenty of textual evidence from the book so that readers have a sense of the text and can follow your reasoning about why you judge it the way you do. In addition, use your own experience and background as support for your judgment and to build your credibility with readers. Finally, include your criteria on which you based your judgment, explaining any controversial ones.

**Arrangement (Organization):**

Your organization should help the reader follow your ideas. Study *Motives* pp. 280-82 for an outline and tips on organization. Be sure your judgment (thesis) is stated explicitly.

**Clarity/Readability/Delivery:**

Write with your audience (well-disposed, intelligent adults) in mind, striving for Standard English and effective style. Make sure you’ve moved from the writer-based prose of early drafts to reader-based prose for delivery. Type your essay following MLA format. Be ready to do a required, handwritten draft in class on Tues., Dec. 2, to share with others. Complete, typed drafts are due Dec. 4 (two copies) and Dec. 9 for peer revision. Turn in your complete essay with revised drafts and peer review sheets in class on Thursday, Dec. 11.

**English 1101 Sample Assignment 7**

**Evaluating Sources**

**Name:** ___________________________________________

1. Brainstorm and write below keywords related to your topic on a privacy issue. Circle one to use in the next activity.

2. Do two different searches, one with the search engine Yahoo and the other with the licensed database EBSCOhost, available through Galileo. Print the results page for each search and attach them to this sheet.

3. Explain the differences in results between the two searches. How do you account for these differences?
4. Choose one source from each and circle its entry on your printed results page. Write a brief paragraph evaluating each source based on the entry below. Comment on its type of publication (genre or type of site), bias, angle of vision.

English 1101 Sample Assignment 8

Strategies for Paragraphs: Introductions, Body, and Conclusions

Developing Body Paragraphs
Through the years, writers have developed many ways to develop paragraphs, and we’ve classified and defined these, often calling them rhetorical methods. They reflect the human thinking process, the way we argue, explain, teach, or make a point. But like human thinking, the methods are best used in combination; remember, essays are living, human products, not static, scientific objects. Choose methods based on the audience and rhetorical situation.

· Use details and examples
· Narrate a sequence of events, sometimes in chronological order
· Describe a person, place, object, or sensation
· Explain a process to show how something happens
· Analyze the cause or consequence of something
· Compare or contrast your topic to show similarities or differences
· Classify or divide your topic
· Define an important concept

Tips:
When you’re revising early drafts, look at paragraph length (you don’t even have to read them). What do you notice? If you have especially long paragraphs, re-read to make sure you’re covering one main idea. If you have a short paragraph, re-read to make sure it works for effect rather than just being underdeveloped.

Developing Introductions and Conclusions
1. Ways to develop introductions (HH 3b):
   a. an interesting fact or unusual detail
   b. an intriguing statement
   c. an anecdote
   d. a question your essay will answer
   e. an appropriate quotation
   f. an illustration
   g. general information on subject or how you came to choose it
   h. state your thesis

Types of introductions (from Jeff Rackham and Olivia Bertagnolli, From Sight to Insight):
   a. provocative lead: catch the reader’s attention with an outrageous statement, “Boys are smarter than girls” and then illustrate your position in contrast to this belief (or give reasons why it’s true).
   b. contrast-and-conflict: establishes the focus by reversing reader’s expectations; begin with a common belief and take the opposite position.
   c. question lead: most common but most easily misused; pose a question your essay will answer; be sure it is answered in your essay and that it doesn’t arose multiple answers.
   d. descriptive lead: illustrates the subject with anecdotes or description of a scene; usually followed with a question, “Is this fair?” that the essay will address
e. **cumulative-interest lead**: creates reader’s interest by piling up facts or details related to the essay; for example, King’s speech might have opened with a series of examples of prejudice that, taken together, illustrate his position that racism is destructive.

2. Ways to Develop Conclusions (HH3b):
   a. Rephrase the thesis and summarize main ideas
   b. Call attention to larger issues
   c. Call for a change in action or attitude
   d. Describe a vivid image that illustrates your point
   e. Connect ideas back to the introduction

**Revising Paragraphs: Unity and Coherence**
Remember, paragraphs should be **unified**—have one main idea—and be **coherent**—follow logically with transitions that cue the reader about what to expect next (HH3c). Most paragraphs should have an explicit topic sentence stating the main idea; if you want to use an implicit main idea, be sure you can describe the main idea anyway and justify why you want to make it implicit.

Use **transitions** for coherence within and between paragraphs. Use pronouns, repetition of important words, phrase, or ideas, parallel structure, and conjunctions. See the list on p. 89. Transitions indicate your thinking about material and cue readers about the relationship between ideas. Thus, they’re crucial for getting your point across.

**Practice:**
Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.
1. Study the introductions in Buruma and Kristof. What type do they use? (Note that introductions are sometimes more than one paragraph in long essays.)

2. Examine the following body paragraphs from Kristoff’s and Buruma’s essays. What rhetorical method does each use for development? Is the topic sentence stated? What transitions do the writers use (note especially transitions that interpret)?
   - Kristoff Paragraph 14:
   - Kristoff Paragraph 18:
   - Buruma Paragraph 8:
   - Buruma Paragraph 10:
   - Buruma Paragraph 12:

3. Examine Kristoff’s and Baruma’s conclusions and discuss below the strategy each uses.

4. Keep these strategies in mind as you draft and revise Paper 3. Which ones are most useful for your particular paper and topic? Which ones are useful for interpretation? We’ll use these same strategies for revising your draft next week.