

THE WRITER'S CIRCLE

English Composition I

Lesson Descriptions

Course Overview:

The Writer's Circle is a college-level English composition course that introduces the basic approaches to essay writing: narration, description, observation, analysis, argument, evaluation, and research. Students follow the writing processes of invention, delivery (rhetorical tools, organizational strategies, voice) and revision. The primary goal of the course is to teach distance learning students college-level writing skills for success in academia and the everyday world. Each Lesson builds upon the preceding Lesson honing student skills in analysis, synthesis, and basic rhetoric.

Lesson Descriptions/Objectives:

1. EXPLORING THE PROCESS

Introduces the recursive writing process and the processes of reading, invention, delivery and revision. Students narrate a past experience with new insight or revelation. Students discover process and how to generate ideas, the writer's voice and peer review techniques.

Goal: The processes of invention, delivery and revision will lead the writer to communicate an insight into a past experience.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will apply the writing process (invention, delivery, revision) to a narrative about the past.
- 2) The student will explore in depth a specific event or situation from the past.
- 3) The student will illustrate a particular insight about the event or situation from the past that led to a revelation or new perspective.
- 4) The student will apply strategies to create voice in a narrative about a specific event or situation from the past.
- 5) The student will revise the narrative of the past through a peer review process.

2. EXPLAINING RELATIONSHIPS

Examines narration and description in writing. Students develop a thesis, explore beginnings, paragraphing and conclusions and revising for best placement of thesis and main idea. Students communicate a discovery of the qualities of a relationship and increase understanding of the existence of undiscovered relationships.

Goal: Through the invention, delivery and revision processes, the student will communicate a discovery of the qualities of a relationship and the increased understanding of the existence of undiscovered relationships.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will identify a thesis dealing with a particular relationship past or present.
- 2) The student will apply organizational strategies to writing an analysis of the relationship, past or present.
- 3) The student will apply revision strategies to determine placement of the elements of the relationship essay.

3. OBSERVING DETAILS

Explains the importance of observation in writing by discovering the unique details of a subject and communicating them in sharp, particular detail. Students discover what lies beneath the first sight. Students find the meaning in a subject, select sensory and specific details to support the thesis, and examine writer's voice.

Goal: Following the processes of invention, delivery, and revision, the student will communicate an increase in the ability to observe details that lead to discovery of what lies beneath the first sight of a subject.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will discover specific and particular details through observing a subject that would not be evident on first sight.
- 2) The student will use rhetorical strategies (i.e., arrangement of details) to communicate the observation of a subject in specific terms.
- 3) The student will revise the observation focusing on the writer's voice (active, passive, present or invisible "I").

4. ANALYZING CONCEPTS

Explores concepts in various points of contact at work, school, church, home, sports events, concerts, community events. Students develop support for a concept in beginnings, endings, placement of ideas, paragraphing and concluding. Students confirm that a concept is relevant to a reader, is clearly expressed and understandable. Students verify the understanding of a concept through analysis and communication of the ideas that lie beyond the concept.

Goal: By following the processes of Invention, Delivery and Revision, the student will communicate the understanding of a concept in the everyday world through analysis and communication of the ideas that lie beyond the concept.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will select a particular concept to analyze in writing.
- 2) The student will practice various organizational strategies for writing about the concept.
- 3) Through the revision process, the student will verify that the concept is clear, understandable and relevant.

5. ANALYZING IMAGES

Describes the process of selecting an image and examining an image to explore its relationship to viewers. Students develop a focused point about an image and support it by evaluating the intensity of the writer's voice. Revision focuses on pruning language for vitality, avoiding vague pronouns and participating in peer review.

Goal: By following the processes introduced in this lesson, the student will increase understanding of explaining how the elements of an image work to impact the feelings and consciousness of the viewers.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will select a particular image to analyze in writing.
- 2) The student will explain how the visual elements of the image affect the viewer's perception.
- 3) The student will analyze the relationship of the image to viewers in terms of text, subtext and context.
- 4) [*for Telecourse Guide and CD/DVD usage*]The student will edit the language of the essay to improve its intensity and coherence.

6. BUILDING ARGUMENTS

Provides tools for persuading an audience on how to think about a particular topic by employing a variety of strategies to convince the audience. Students deliver an argument to discover and encourage new ways of thinking about a topic. Students analyze the arguability of a thesis, develop support, evidence, logic and appeals, and organize counterargument and concession effectively in an argument.

Goal: Following the argumentative processes outlined in this lesson, the student will employ a variety of rhetorical strategies to communicate increased persuasive skills in convincing an audience to think differently about a topic.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will write an arguable thesis statement with a specific claim.
- 2) The student will support the arguable thesis with evidence, appeals and logic.
- 3) The student will revise drafts using rhetorical strategies that strengthen the argumentative position.

7. RESPONDING TO ARGUMENTS

Develops techniques to respond to existing arguments. Students respond to the positions taken in an argument external to the writer. Students find an argument for response by applying Toulmin's analytical tools, focus on voice, word choice, sentence structure and tone in delivery, and revise to avoid character slams, emotionality and preachiness.

Goal: As the writer applies the process of invention, delivery and revision to an argumentative response, the writer will communicate the ability to understand the process of analyzing someone else's argument.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will select a formal argument for response.
- 2) The student will determine why the response to the argument should make a difference to the audience.
- 3) The student will analyze the response to the formal argument using Toulmin's analytical tools.
- 4) The student will focus on voice and tone in developing a position for the formal argument.
- 5) The student will revise the response to the argument particularly the voice and tone based on feedback from peers.

8. EVALUATING AND ORGANIZING

Introduces evaluation skills for argumentative writing. Students analyze a topic and establish criteria for judgment, organize and arrange the elements of evaluation to apply and prioritize criteria, and revise based on global revision questions. Students communicate the ability to make judgments, distinguishing the best course of action and clarifying options when many seem available.

Goal: As the writer applies the invention, delivery and revision processes to the evaluation of a topic, the writer will communicate the ability to make judgments outside of personal tastes in making valuable decisions, distinguishing the best course of action and clarifying options when many seem available.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will develop criteria for evaluating processes in a formal evaluation of a subject in the major field or a literary work for an argumentative evaluation essay.
- 2) The student will make judgments outside of personal tastes to make a decision, to distinguish the best course of action and to clarify options in developing a formal argumentative evaluation.
- 3) The student will incorporate the elements of evaluation to develop a formal argument.
- 4) The student will revise the formal argumentative evaluation to avoid wordiness and repetition and to add missing information where needed.

9. INTEGRATING RESEARCH

Provides guidelines for research using MLA or APA format. Students locate a variety of sources (books, periodicals, journals, newspapers, websites, search engines, films, videos, interviews) and integrate research findings via paraphrase, summary or quote. Students communicate the ability to apply the standard rules of research to integrate the ideas of others as well as the ideas of the writer.

Goal: As the writer applies the processes of invention, delivery and revision to a researched argument, the student will communicate the ability to apply the standard rules of research for the format of research documents which integrate the ideas of others as well as the ideas of the writer.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will apply basic research methods in gathering and organizing information from a variety of sources for a researched argument.
- 2) The student will quote, paraphrase and summarize information gathered from external sources in a researched argument.
- 3) The student will integrate external source information with the student's own opinion on the topic.
- 4) The student will avoid plagiarism in argumentative research.
- 5) The student will revise the argumentative research to insure that sources are adequately integrated and properly cited.

10. SEARCHING FOR CAUSES

Presents the possibilities of discovering the cause of behaviors, events or trends. Students discover a topic, develop support for the topic (including outside sources and interviews), and attend to writer's voice by creating credibility and projecting wonder. Students communicate an attempt to find the answers in a search for causes in everyday life.

Goal: As the writer applies the processes of invention, delivery and revision to writing an argument, the writer will communicate an attempt to find the answers in a search for causes of behaviors, events and trends in everyday life.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will research questions that lead to developing critical perspectives on behaviors, events and trends.
- 2) The student will research a possible cause for a behavior, event or trend after focusing on a particular topic.
- 3) The student will develop an argument in favor of a particular cause using surveys and external research.
- 4) The student will attempt various support strategies to increase the credibility of the writer's voice in writing a causal argument.
- 5) The student will revise the causal argument after participating in a peer review session.

11. IMAGINING SOLUTIONS

Examines issues and problems to seek out the best solutions. Students find a problem to be solved and determine the public resonance of the issue. Students use rhetorical tools such as counterarguments and alternative solutions and analyze to see how the solutions they discover go beyond initial biases. Students communicate to readers that a problem must be addressed, that action is necessary and that the proposed solution has value.

Goal: As the writer applies the processes of invention, delivery and revision to an argumentative paper about proposing solutions, the writer will communicate to readers that a problem must be addressed, that action is necessary and that the proposed solution has value.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will discover a problem that needs rethinking.
- 2) The student will analyze the causes of the problem that needs rethinking.
- 3) The student will include the key elements of argument (organization, thesis, support, counterargument, concessions) in proposing the solution to a problem.
- 4) The student will hone analytical and sentence skills in revising an argument that solves a particular problem.

12. DISCOVERING VOICE

Interprets the skills necessary to judge and respond to works of art. Students analyze and delve deeper into an art work rather than doing a surface evaluation. Students attend to the writer's voice and learn to avoid over-enthusiasm and harsh description in order to promote wonder. Revision techniques involve reworking the title, introduction and conclusion of an analysis of a work of art.

Goal: As the writer applies the processes of invention, delivery and revision to an argumentative paper on exploring the arts, the student will communicate that art is an investigation into human thought and imagination as well as culture and society.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will analyze a work or works of art through reading and discussion.
- 2) The student will develop a specific point about the work or works of art that explains why or how the work makes a difference in everyday life.
- 3) The student will communicate ideas about the work or works of art to an audience using the elements of evaluation.
- 4) The student will explore ways to refine the key elements of the argument.
- 5) The student will refine the writer's voice to promote wonder and to avoid over-enthusiasm and harsh description in an argument about a work or works of art.

13. THINKING RADICALLY

Communicates an effort to escape conventional thought patterns to change the thinking of an audience. Students specifically address argumentative support, particularly evidence and appeals. Revision techniques explore figurative language and questions posed to insure that the argument is clear, supported and accepted by the intended audience. Students escape conventional thinking to imagine and write about something outside common intellectual activity.

Goal: As the writer applies the processes of invention, delivery and revision to a paper of radical thought, the student will be able to escape conventional thinking to imagine and write about something outside common intellectual activity.

Objectives:

- 1) The student will discover a new idea by questioning, imagining and exploring unconventional possibilities.
- 2) The student will develop a focused thesis using rhetorical tools to develop thoughts.
- 3) The student will apply the support strategies of evidence and appeals in developing the argument of radical thinking.
- 4) The student will engage readers by paying particular attention to tone and voice in an argument of radical thought.
- 5) The student will use global revision questions (arrangement, structure) to revise an argument of radical thought.

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