

Academic Writing I: Course Syllabus



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Instructor

Janet Goodrich earned a PhD in English from the University of Kentucky in 1998. Since then she has taught at four different colleges in two different states, home educated her two daughters, and worked as an online writing tutor for an international educational company. These experiences have given her an amazing respect for the diverse ways people learn. [Check out her more complete introduction here.](#)

Communication Preferences

I designed this course for students to access and complete independently, without direct teacher instruction. Students should be able to access instructional materials and complete all assigned work at times that work with your family's schedule. However, if you have questions about the work, you may use the "Ask a Question" discussion within the course to ask. Alternatively, feel free to contact the instructor using the contact form, or the email address given to enrolled students. I check my email daily and will respond.

To locate the "Ask a Question" discussion, [visit the forum page for the course](#). You'll see "Ask a Question," as well as a post outlining the ground rules and tips for discussions, at the top of the forum page. All the other discussions for the course are listed on the forum page as well.

Course Description

In this 16-week course, students learn skills and strategies to produce four essays appropriate for an academic audience: a Literacy Narrative, an Observation, an Evaluation, and a Position Argument.

Goals

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Implement a consistent, systematic writing process to develop their ideas
2. Write effective essays focused on different tasks for an academic audience
3. Practice informal research

This is the first of a two-course sequence. The second course, Academic Writing II, will introduce students to more formal researched writing.

Prerequisite Knowledge

This course is for high school juniors or seniors. To succeed, they should already have a solid foundation in basic writing skills such as sentence mechanics, sentence structure and paragraphing. They should have experience in writing short papers such as book reports, journal entries, history essays, and other common school writing assignments.

Students should also have access to the internet and, preferably, to a good library.

Textbook and Other Resources

For help with issues of writing and grammar, [The Little Seagull Handbook with Exercises 4E](#) provides clear explanations of writing practices and concepts, exercises, and an interactive quizzing tool called InQuizitive that uses a game-style format for students to practice. InQuizitive activities will be assigned throughout the course, but students are free to use the tool on their own as often as they want if there is something they want to practice.

Another online resource is the Purdue OWL (Online Writing Center), which also provides good [explanations and exercises](#). For assistance with MLA Style, refer to the Purdue OWL [MLA Style Guide](#).

Course Information

After a week of introduction, this class consists of four modules delivered asynchronously online. This means that work is assigned each week, but within the week students can complete the work on the days and times that are convenient for them, rather than having scheduled class meetings. The four modules are:

- Module 1: Literacy Narrative (Weeks 2-4)
- Module 2: Observation (Weeks 5-8)
- Module 3: Evaluation (Weeks 9-12)
- Module 4: Position Argument (Weeks 13-16)

How to Succeed

- Participate in class discussions. Interacting with other students adds to the learning and helps to transform the course from a solitary activity to a fuller, more enjoyable learning experience.
- Complete the work for each week in the week it is assigned. This will prevent falling behind and creating a situation in which it is difficult or impossible to catch up.
- Achieve a passing grade based on the grading approach chosen by your parent/teacher.

Grading

Grading methods and rubrics are explained in the Parent Guide. Grade rubrics are also provided within the course so students are able to review them if desired.

Course Portfolio

Throughout the course, students and parents can work together to create a writing portfolio of their work. At minimum, all process work for the four major essays, such as prewriting and drafting, should be saved to show the progression of each paper's creation. A Checklist of Assignments is provided within the course as well as in the Parent Guide, and the portfolio may include other types of assignments as well if desired.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to do their own work. This is the only way to learn. Do not copy anyone else's work, or copy anything from the internet, and represent it as your own. If you would like additional clarity on what constitutes plagiarism, consider [doing this tutorial](#) on academic honesty, produced by the Open Educational Resource *College Success*.

Technical Requirements

- Access to the course at *Across the Page*
- Ability to view PDF documents, and work with Microsoft Word documents
- A reliable laptop or other device with reliable internet access and ability to produce written documents