

Write What Matters

Write What Matters

*A modular open educational resource to support
first-year writing courses in Idaho*

*LIZA LONG; AMY MINERVINI; AND JOEL
GLADD*

MSL ACADEMIC ENDEAVORS
BOISE



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Part XXIII. Feedback for "Write What Matters"

About This Book

AMY MINERVINI; LIZA LONG; AND JOEL GLADD

Welcome to *Write What Matters!*

Have you ever wished for a comprehensive source that would steer you in the right direction through all of your reading and writing assignments? This text aims to be that kind of guide. We included lessons, examples, exercises, and definitions for many of the reading and writing-related situations that you will encounter in your first-year writing courses as well as other subject-specific classes that require writing.

This book was created as part of the 2020-2021 OPAL Fellowship for the Idaho State Board of Education. Co-editors Joel Gladd (College of Western Idaho), Liza Long (College of Western Idaho), and Amy Minervini (Lewis-Clark State College) are professors. Reviewer Jamaica Richer (University of Idaho) is a writing center director. All are OPAL Fellows.

This text was co-written and co-edited by college writing instructors with decades of experience teaching students who are entering the college reading and writing environment for the first time. Our interactive, multimedia text draws from a rich set of existing open educational resources, which were carefully curated with you in mind. In addition to you—students in first-year writing courses—other intended users include full-time and adjunct faculty at all Idaho colleges and universities, dual-credit teachers in Idaho, instructors at other institutions whose states have similar written communication competencies, and the casual user who just wants to brush up on critical reading and writing skills.

Our Philosophy

We wanted our new text to work as a modular support for first-year writing course around the state of Idaho. Using the Idaho State Board of Education Written Communication (GEM 1) standards as our guide, we created a textbook that approaches writing and rhetoric by situation (exigency). We want our textbook to be useful to college composition instructors as a resource for a variety of writing tasks. The text is designed to allow instructors and students to choose the most useful content to support their learning. We believe this type of text fosters student-centered teaching as students learn to **write what matters** in a variety of academic and professional contexts.

Because we support Open Educational Resources (OER), our text represents a collaboration, reuse, and sharing of others' Creative Commons licensed content. As much as possible, we have tried to create a text with diverse perspectives and writing styles. Including work by multiple authors can provide a starting point for conversations in writing courses about how writing “actually works in the real world” (Wardle and Downs). We have also included writing prompts and student essays and will continue to add more resources in our ongoing revisions to reinforce and demonstrate the subjects we cover in this text. We invite you to be a part of that process by providing feedback as well as using, reusing, or remixing any of the materials in this text in accordance with the terms of their Creative Commons licenses.

How You Can Use This Text

This is a use-it-as-you-need-it kind of text. In other words, you don't have to read every word from beginning to end, nor do we expect you to! Instead, skip around using the table of contents to

find answers to your questions or to find practice exercises that will improve your reading and writing skills. You might find it useful to have this text with you as you're planning or doing reading and writing assignments because confusion will happen, questions will come up, and we're here to help when you need it most.

Write What Matters is designed to support, not replace, the writing instructor or writing center. Our hope is that instructors will use sections of the book that support their personal approaches to classroom instruction. We aim to provide a useful resource for college instructors, support for part-time faculty and dual-credit teachers, and a guide for students who seek success in academic and professional writing.

How Our Text Is Organized

As mentioned in our philosophy statement, this text is loosely organized around the Seven General Education Skill Competency and Knowledge Objectives for the state of Idaho colleges and universities. According to the Idaho State Board of Education site, “Upon completion of the Written Communication component of General Education, a student will be able to

1. *Use flexible writing process strategies to generate, develop, revise, edit, and proofread texts*
2. *Adopt strategies and genre that are appropriate to the rhetorical situation*
3. *Use inquiry-based strategies to conduct research that explores multiple and diverse ideas and perspectives, appropriate to the rhetorical context*
4. *Use rhetorically appropriate strategies to evaluate, represent, and respond to the ideas and research of others*
5. *Address readers' biases and assumptions with well-developed evidence-based reasoning*

6. *Use appropriate conventions for integrating, citing, and documenting source material as well as for surface-level language and style.*
7. *Read, interpret, and communicate key concepts in writing and rhetoric.*

We recognize that while a few of these outcomes are self-contained, many of these competencies and objectives intersect and are addressed and integrated within various sections of our textbook.

The content of this textbook is aimed at helping students meet these learning objectives. This textbook contains 12 major sections:

1. The Writing Process
2. Reading and Writing Rhetorically
3. Essay Types
 1. Writing your story
 2. Writing to inform
 3. Writing to analyze
 4. Writing to evaluate
 5. Writing to persuade
 6. Writing for social change
 7. Writing to reflect
4. Writing with Sources
5. Addressing Bias and Stakeholder Claims
6. Writing to Inquire: The Research Process
7. Writing for Employment
8. MLA and APA Documentation and Formatting
9. Writing Basics
 1. What makes a good sentence
 2. Punctuation
 3. Word choice
 4. Help for English Language Learners
10. Writing and Rhetoric Readings and Resources Collection
11. Feedback from you

The “Essay Types” section, which houses a number of chapters, is geared toward English 101 or similar foundational writing courses in which various modes are explored. The “Writing to Inquire” section is more appropriate for English 102 or similar inquiry or research-based writing courses. All other sections and chapters can be used for English 101 and 102 courses because these areas cover competencies that are essential to all types of academic writing. The primary content provided in each competency area has been integrated with both students’ and instructors’ cognitive load in mind. The latter part of the textbook contains supplementary readings that can be integrated as necessary to augment particular lessons or assignments. You may notice that the major part of the text you’re working within is identified at the top of the page. We hope this helps you to navigate between sections and subsections and to understand the relationships between them. When using this book in a modular fashion, instructors may link directly to the section of the book that applies to their instruction.

Gender and Gender-Neutral Language

As you read, you may notice that we use a variety of pronouns such as she/her, he/him, or they/them to refer to a person we’re discussing. Our goal is to represent all people, regardless of gender, and to do so in a balanced way. Therefore, in some paragraphs, we may designate “she” as the pronoun, while in others “he” will stand in for the person being written about. However, you’ll also come across “they” being used as a singular pronoun, which may be confusing at first. The pronoun “they” allows a single person to represent any gender, including those genders that aren’t accurately represented by “he” and “she.” It’s important to consider gender-neutral language in your own writing, so we wanted to make sure we modeled what that looks like in this text.

Culturally Relevant and Affirming

The rhetoric, lessons, examples, assignments, and readings include a range of perspectives and cultures in an effort to be inclusive. That said, if you come across a word, phrase, or sentiment that does otherwise, please do not hesitate to contact us so that we can make changes in our textbook. The Anti-Racist, Anti-Ableist, and LGBTQI+ readings and resources chapters provide content that will encourage critical thinking about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. All four public colleges in Idaho identify inclusion, diversity, and equity as valued principles to uphold: [Lewis-Clark State College](#), [Idaho State University](#), [University of Idaho](#), and [Boise State University](#). Future iterations of this text will include Latinx resources.

Accessibility

Our textbook has been written with accessibility in mind. Instructors can upload the whole text to online learning systems, such as Blackboard, Canvas, and Google Classroom. However, we know that consistent WiFi is a problem in rural areas of our state, so the book can be downloaded in multiple formats including PDF and EPUB or MOBI files. It can also be accessed through text-to-speech readers provided through your learning institutions or other common text to speech tools, such as Read Aloud and Dragon. All videos have subtitles/closed captioning.

A Note about Citations

This text includes a combination of chapters using MLA and APA, maintaining a single format consistency within that particular

chapter. Using MLA and APA mimics real-world writing in which both formats are used extensively. While you would never want to combine formats within one paper (stay consistent with just one format on a single paper), students should have knowledge of both formats that will be used throughout their college career.

A Note about Source Attribution

In addition to new content, this book draws on a variety of existing OER resources. Within each chapter there are sections written by Joel Gladd, Amy Minervini, and Liza Long, and authorial attributions are given. This book also contains other resources integrated under Creative Commons licenses. These open education resources (OER) include complete and remixed chapters and are enhanced with digital reading experience by including videos and visual reading features. Shared and remixed materials are denoted with attribution information when necessary in the shaded box at the bottom of those pages. This book was peer reviewed by Jamaica Richter. If you are interested in reviewing and/or contributing to this book, please reach out to us by using the feedback form at the end of the book.

Links and References in Online and Print Versions of This Text

The online text includes links, but we've used specific language to allow readers of the print version to find the same pages within the text or outside resources. For example, in the "Summarizing a Text" section, we mention an external text in this sentence: "In his essay, "[Consider the Lobster](#)," writer David Foster Wallace asks readers to consider the ethical implications of feasting on lobsters. (You can find a copy of this essay online at [Gourmet.com](#).)" If you're using

the print version of this text, you can find that David Foster Wallace essay by doing a web search using the title, author, and website like this: “consider the lobster david foster wallace gourmet.com.” If you’re looking for a page within this text that we’ve linked to, go to the Table of Contents, and look for the title of the relevant section there.

Note to teachers: Make sure you let students using the print version know this so they can access web resources.

Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge the traditional and ancestral lands of the Shoshone-Bannock, the Shoshone-Paiute, the Coeur d’Alene, the Kootenai, and the Nez Perce tribes on which we are teaching, learning and working today. The struggle for Indigenous rights is deeply connected to human rights. It is important that the stories and traditions from tribal nations are heard, celebrated, and protected.

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About the Authors

Amy Minervini

I'm thrilled to be working for Lewis-Clark State College as an instructor in the Humanities Division. My passion is teaching rhetoric and composition courses (English 101 & English 102) and helping students to become stronger writers and critical thinkers. I also teach a content methods, intro to literature, and journalism course and am a strong advocate for our awesome student newspaper, *The Pathfinder*. I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature in 1997 and my Master of Arts in English Literature in 1999, both from University of Idaho. I also have minors in Spanish and journalism.

As a strong believer in lifelong learning, I more recently earned my post-baccalaureate degree from Lewis-Clark State College in secondary education with an English/Language Arts emphasis. My broadened knowledge base in pedagogy as well as the middle and high school student populations have helped me to better understand the strengths and challenges of incoming freshman at LCSC. A longtime resident of the Valley, I love spending time with my two kids and parents and exploring our beautiful corner of the world. I enjoy archery, golfing, tinkering with new technology, thrift shopping, and of course, surfing Netflix. **There are risks and costs to action. But they are far less than the long range risks of comfortable inaction.** –John F. Kennedy

Liza Long

I am an author, educator, and mother of four children, one of whom has bipolar disorder. My book, *The Price of Silence: A Mom's Perspective on Mental Illness* (Hudson Street Press, 2014), was a "Books for a Better Life" award winner. My essays have appeared in USA Today, the Huffington Post, Psychology Today, Time.com, The Mighty, MindBodyGreen, Good Men Project, and Boise State University's The Blue Review, among others. Since my essay "I Am Adam Lanza's Mother" went viral, I have appeared on the Today Show, Good Morning America, Erin Burnett Out Front, Anderson Cooper 360, Don Lemon, Dr. Oz, the Diane Rehm Show, NPR's Weekend Edition, and other programs. I presented talks on children's mental health and stigma at TEDx San Antonio in October 2013 and at the National Council for Behavioral Health in March 2016. I was featured in the Peabody award-winning HBO documentary *A Dangerous Son* in May 2018 and participated in the 2019 Columbine documentary, *An American Tragedy*.

I hold a B.A. in Classics from Brigham Young University (1994); an M.A. in Classics from the University of California, Los Angeles (1997), and an Ed.D. in Organizational Leadership from Argosy University (2016). My dissertation research focused on mental health advocacy and leadership strengths. I am an assistant professor of English at the College of Western Idaho and live in Eagle, Idaho. I am passionate about inclusivity and diversity and believe that education has the power to change lives for the better.

Joel Gladd

My B.A. is in English and Philosophy, from Wake Forest University (2004). I earned a Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Literary Studies (2013). In 2013, I began teaching at the College of Western Idaho, where I currently specialize in teaching Writing

and Rhetoric and American Literature. My content expertise is in American literature, but I'm equally passionate about open access, open education, and inclusive teaching pedagogy. I consider digital tools such as the Pressbooks platform, Hypothesis, and H5P to be important components of inclusive pedagogy, rather than merely “ed-tech” add-ons. I see this open textbook, *Write What Matters*, as a living platform for engagement—for students, certainly, but also other teachers and professors.

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We wish you well on your academic journey, and we hope this first-year writing OER textbook supports you throughout your first college writing courses and beyond.

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[Idaho State Board of Education Written Communication General Education Skill Competency and Knowledge Objectives](#)

PART I

THE WRITING PROCESS

This section introduces students to the writing process for college essay assignments. It can be read sequentially, beginning with Critical Reading and ending with Revise and Edit. A sequential reading pairs nicely with research-based academic essays, which is also covered by the parts [Writing to Persuade](#) and [Writing to Inquire](#).

On the other hand, many of the following chapters can be read in isolation from the others to help with a particular assignment or stage within it. “Critical Reading” covers reading foundational strategies that apply to many assignments and even different courses. The three chapters on Drafting, as well as “Revise and Edit,” also apply to most academic essay writing situations.

While these chapters cover the basics of reading, pre-writing, drafting, and revision, they are not intended to prepare students for particular genres of writing assignments, such as how to draft an informative essay or a personal narrative. Those sections are covered separately, in other Parts of this textbook.



*The Writing
Process.
CC-BY-4.0.*

I. Critical Reading

This chapter focuses on the importance of critical reading in the writing process.



Critical Reading is the first part of the Writing Process.
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I. How is reading for college different?

As you begin this chapter, you may be wondering why you need an introduction. After all, you have been writing and reading since elementary school. You completed numerous assessments of your reading and writing skills in high school and as part of your application process for college. You may write on the job, too. Why is a college writing course even necessary?

When you are eager to get started on the coursework in your major that will prepare you for your career, getting excited about an introductory college writing course can be difficult. However, regardless of your field of study, honing your writing skills—and your reading and critical-thinking skills—gives you a more solid academic foundation.

In college, academic expectations change from what you may have experienced in high school. The quantity of work you are expected to do is increased. When instructors expect you to read pages upon pages or study hours and hours for one particular course, managing your work load can be challenging. This chapter includes strategies for studying efficiently and managing your time.

The quality of the work you do also changes. It is not enough to understand course material and summarize it on an exam. You will also be expected to seriously engage with new ideas by reflecting on them, analyzing them, critiquing them, making connections, drawing conclusions, or finding new ways of thinking about a given subject. Educationally, you are moving into deeper waters. A good introductory writing course will help you swim.

Table 1.1 “High School versus College Assignments” summarizes some of the other major differences between high school and college assignments:

Table 1.1. High School vs. College Reading Assignments

High School Reading Assignments	College Reading Assignments
Reading assignments are moderately long. Teachers may set aside some class time for reading and reviewing the material in depth.	Some reading assignments may be very long. You will be expected to come to class with a basic understanding of the material.
Teachers often provide study guides and other aids to help you prepare for exams.	Reviewing for exams is primarily your responsibility.
Your grade is determined by your performance on a wide variety of assessments, including minor and major assignments. Not all assessments are writing based.	Your grade may depend on just a few major assessments. Most assessments are writing based.
Writing assignments include personal writing and creative writing in addition to expository writing.	Outside of creative writing courses, most writing assignments are expository.
The structure and format of writing assignments is generally stable over a four-year period.	Depending on the course, you may be asked to master new forms of writing and follow standards within a particular professional field.
Teachers often go out of their way to identify and try to help students who are performing poorly on exams, missing classes, not turning in assignments, or just struggling with the course. Often teachers will give students many “second chances.”	Although teachers want their students to succeed, they may not always realize when students are struggling. They also expect you to be proactive and take steps to help yourself. “Second chances” are less common.

This chapter covers the types of reading and writing assignments you will encounter as a college student. You will also learn a variety of strategies for mastering these new challenges—and becoming a more confident student and writer.

Throughout this chapter, you will follow a first-year student named Crystal. After several years of working as a saleswoman in a department store, Crystal has decided to pursue a degree in elementary education and become a teacher. She is continuing to work part-time, and occasionally she finds it challenging to balance the demands of work, school, and caring for her four-year-old son. As you read about Crystal, think about how you can use her experience to get the most out of your own college experience.

Exercise 1.1

Review Table 1.1 “High School versus College Assignments” and think about how you have found your college experience to be different from high school so far. Respond to the following questions:

1. In what ways do you think college will be more rewarding for you as a learner?
2. What aspects of college do you expect to find most challenging?
3. What changes do you think you might have to make in your life to ensure your success in college?

II. Reading Strategies

Your college courses will sharpen both your reading and your writing skills. Most of your writing assignments—from brief response papers to in-depth research projects—will depend on your understanding of course reading assignments or related readings you do on your own. And it is difficult, if not impossible, to write effectively about a text that you have not understood. Even when you do understand the reading, it can be hard to write about it if you do not feel personally engaged with the ideas discussed.

This section discusses strategies you can use to get the most out of your college reading assignments. These strategies fall into three broad categories:

1. **Planning strategies.** To help you manage your reading assignments.
2. **Comprehension strategies.** To help you understand the material.
3. **Active reading strategies.** To take your understanding to a higher and deeper level.

Planning Your Reading

Have you ever stayed up all night cramming just before an exam? Or found yourself skimming a detailed memo from your boss five minutes before a crucial meeting? The first step in handling college reading successfully is planning. This involves both managing your time and setting a clear purpose for your reading.

Managing Your Reading Time

Focus on setting aside enough time for reading and breaking your assignments into manageable chunks. If you are assigned a seventy-page chapter to read for next week's class, try not to wait until the night before to get started. Give yourself at least a few days and tackle one section at a time.

Your method for breaking up the assignment will depend on the type of reading. If the text is very dense and packed with unfamiliar terms and concepts, you may need to read no more than five or ten pages in one sitting so that you can truly understand and process the information. With more user-friendly texts, you will be able to handle longer sections—twenty to forty pages, for instance. And if you have a highly engaging reading assignment, such as a novel you cannot put down, you may be able to read lengthy passages in one sitting.

As the semester progresses, you will develop a better sense of how much time you need to allow for the reading assignments in different subjects. It also makes sense to preview each assignment well in advance to assess its difficulty level and to determine how much reading time to set aside.

Setting a Purpose

The other key component of planning is setting a purpose. Knowing what you want to get out of a reading assignment helps you determine how to approach it and how much time to spend on it. It also helps you stay focused during those occasional moments when it is late, you are tired, and relaxing in front of the television sounds far more appealing than curling up with a stack of journal articles. Sometimes your purpose is simple. You might just need to understand the reading material well enough to discuss it

intelligently in class the next day. However, your purpose will often go beyond that. For instance, you might also read to compare two texts, to formulate a personal response to a text, or to gather ideas for future research. Here are some questions to ask to help determine your purpose:

- **How did my instructor frame the assignment?** Often your instructors will tell you what they expect you to get out of the reading:
 - Read Chapter 2 and come to class prepared to discuss current teaching practices in elementary math.
 - Read these two articles and compare Smith's and Jones's perspectives on the 2010 health care reform bill.
 - Read Chapter 5 and think about how you could apply these guidelines to running your own business.
- **How deeply do I need to understand the reading?** If you are majoring in computer science and you are assigned to read Chapter 1, "Introduction to Computer Science," it is safe to assume the chapter presents fundamental concepts that you will be expected to master. However, for some reading assignments, you may be expected to form a general understanding but not necessarily master the content. Again, pay attention to how your instructor presents the assignment.
- **How does this assignment relate to other course readings or to concepts discussed in class?** Your instructor may make some of these connections explicitly, but if not, try to draw connections on your own. (Needless to say, it helps to take detailed notes both when in class and when you read.)
- **How might I use this text again in the future?** If you are assigned to read about a topic that has always interested you, your reading assignment might help you develop ideas for a future research paper. Some reading assignments provide valuable tips or summaries worth bookmarking for future reference. Think about what you can take from the reading that will stay with you.