

Benefitting Most from a Writing Tutorial

Writing Lab Orientation for ESL Writers



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Brought to you in cooperation with the Purdue Online Writing Lab



What is a Tutorial?

Tutorial: 30 minute one-to-one session with a tutor.

Purpose: To help you become a better writer

What Happens?

- You bring your paper or assignment.
- You ask questions.
- Tutor tries to answer them.
- Tutor asks questions to help you approach the writing task.



What a Tutor Can Do

A tutor can help you with:

- Invention
- Research
- Drafting
- Revising
- Editing





What a Tutor Can't Do

A tutor does NOT:

- Correct/proofread your paper, because that does not help YOU to become a better writer.

However, the tutor can teach you HOW to proofread.





Dos and Don'ts

- ✓ Plan ahead: come when you start writing or with a first draft.
- ✗ Do NOT come the day when the assignment is due because you will have little time for revision!
- ✓ Before you come, decide what you need help with.
- ✓ Make a list of questions you want to ask.
- ✗ Do NOT expect to work on too many issues in one tutorial; 30 minutes go by very fast.



Setting an Agenda

Why is agenda-setting important?

- Tutorials are different from the instruction in the classroom setting.
- Tutors usually ask you what you want to work on.
- You know your own writing and assignment best.
- The tutorial mainly focuses on Higher Order Concerns



Higher Order Concerns

Higher Order Concerns (HOC) are:

- Focus/Thesis
- Purpose
- Audience
- Organization

Revising the thesis:

~~Pollution is bad for the environment.~~ ✘

America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars. ✓



Lower Order Concerns

Lower Order Concerns (LOC) are:

- Grammar
 - Sentence structure
 - Punctuation
 - Prepositions
 - Articles
 - Verb tense
- Word choice
- Spelling



Need to Prioritize

If you want to work on both HOCs and LOCs with a writing tutor, always start with HOCs because...

- Time is limited to 30 minutes.
- After your work on HOCs, you may delete/add some sentences or paragraphs



Common Issues

1. Instructions for the assignment.
2. Your familiarity with the genre.
3. Preferred textual patterns in American Academic English (AAE).
4. Development.
5. Lower Order Concerns.

Let's see if you have any of these issues in your writing:



Instructions for The Assignment

Do you have any questions about the assignment?

Do you have the assignment sheet?

Assignment: Academic Argument Essay

5-7 pages, Times New Roman 12 pt. font, 1 inch margins.

Minimum of five cited sources: 3 must be from academic journals or books

Design Plan due: Thurs. 10/19

Rough Draft due: Monday 10/30

Final Draft due: Thurs. 11/9

The design plan is simply a statement of purpose, as described on pages 40-41 of the book, and an outline. The outline may be formal, as we discussed in class, or a printout of an Open Mind project. It must be a minimum of 1 page typed information, plus 1 page outline.



Your Familiarity With The Genre

Have you worked on this kind of writing task before?

Did you read samples written by others?

What questions do you have about the writing task?



Thesis statement (your main point).

Structure

Transitions

Direct, concise, and to the point

References / Works cited (in some assignments)



Have you supported your main points with supporting details?

For example:

The technology farmers used around 1820 was developed from three main sources. **First**, developments that took place in Europe with the development of industry continued to impact farming practices worldwide. **Second**, farmers looked to the techniques developed by coastal Indian tribes in America for expertise, since these techniques were created for the crops and climates unique to the Americas. **Finally**, domestic modifications made from the first two sources' technologies were engineered by American farmers themselves to meet the farmers' specific needs.



Lower Order Concerns

Analyze your own writing:

Grammar:

What are the patterns of grammatical errors I tend to make?

What grammatical errors can I correct on my own?

Word Choice:

What are the words I am using but uncertain about?

Did I check these words in the dictionary?



Using a Dictionary

Most dictionaries will:

- Tell you the part of speech of words.
- Give you examples of word usage.
- Provide collocations.
- Provide usage notes.



Dictionaries for ESL Students

Longman Dictionary of American English

Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English

Longman Web Dictionary: www.longmanwebdict.com

as·sign·ment

1 [**uncountable and countable**] a piece of work that is given to someone as part of their job

on an assignment

🔊 *She's gone to Italy on a special assignment.*

on assignment

🔊 *He was killed while on assignment abroad.*

2 [**countable**] a piece of work that a student is asked to do:

🔊 *a history assignment*



Dictionary Use Basics

Read the Full Guide for Users!

Learn grammar:

- Parts of speech

Learn Usage:

- collocations
- phrasal verbs
- usage notes



Longman

Dictionary of Contemporary English



Search

Widgets

How to use

About LDOCE



Ask Yourself About Grammar

What are my grammar questions?

- Can I find the answer in a good dictionary?

If you cannot:

- What exactly is my grammar question? Can I write it down?

What to do next:

- Underline the parts you have questions about.
- Then take your questions and your paper to the Writing Lab.



We Have Covered

- What a writing tutorial is.
- What a tutor can help you with your writing process.
- Dos and Don'ts.
- A Five-Topic agenda-generator.

We hope you have learned more about writing tutorials and benefit most from them in the future!



Purdue University Writing Lab, Heavilon 226

Check our web site: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>

Email brief questions to OWL Mail:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/contact/owlmailtutors>



The End

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