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# How Do Communities Shape Writing?

**Note to the Instructor: Select this unit on discourse communities or the unit on Understanding and Joining Academic Communities.**

This unit looks at how groups of people communicate and use language differently.

We will study and learn about what defines a discourse community and how members communicate to become successful in those discourses. You may be asking, how is this relevant to me? Throughout our lives, we move in and out of various groups. You may want to join a club, an organization, an alumni association, or an association that benefits your major or career.

Each time we enter a new discourse, we have to learn how to navigate. That could require understanding new words, new situations, or understanding which members have authority. How we navigate in a new discourse can determine if we are successful in this new community or not. So, this unit is about understanding how groups use language and genres differently to achieve their goals.

* All the readings for this unit are available the text Writing about Writing by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs.
* Suggested major writing assignments for this unit are available on pages 574-577 in Writing about Writing.
* All outcomes for this unit are found in Chapter Four in Writing about Writing on pg. 465.

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## Week One: What Exactly Is A Discourse Community?

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### Outcomes:

* Students will investigate the criteria to determine what counts as a discourse community.
* Students will investigate how and why discourse conventions differ across groups.

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* Discuss the various organizations and communities students belong to. Discuss what genres and languages students use when they are in the community.
* Then, refer to the power point on writing with authority and determine how students can gain authority in their writing. Click here to view the power point: [writing with authority.pptx](https://www.coursesites.com/bbcswebdav/xid-2507536_1)
* Hand out the major writing assignment for this unit and discuss how the activities and referenced outcomes will help write the paper.

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#### Read:

Swales, John. "The Concept of a Discourse Community." Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings. Boston: Cambridge UP, 1990. 21-32. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 466)

#### Discuss:

1. Click here to look at the web site Beyond Hogwarts: [http://www.beyondhogwarts.com](http://www.beyondhogwarts.com/) and find two additional social networking or blog sites. Explain how each function as discourse communities and give examples of some of their genres. How do these genre and lexis help the community achieve their shared goals? If one doesn't appear to be a discourse community, discuss why. Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Beyond Hogwarts by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.** Include the URL for the other sites you examined even if you choose not to discuss them.
2. Now look at two other classmates' posts and look at their sites and evaluate the claims they make about discourse communities. Make sure you reference the web sites they chose before responding. Then, decide if you agree or disagree with their conclusions. **Reply by Monday before 11:00 p.m.** Instead of creating a new discussion board, post your response under their original post.

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**Week Two: How Language Practices Shape Various Communities**

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### Outcomes:

* Students will investigate how language practices mediate group activities.

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* Discuss how students compared the Beyond Hogwart's web site to others. How does Swales' definition of a discourse community present challenges or varied interpretations?
* Discuss the varied lexis students found when examining the varied discourses community. What distinctions or observations did students make?
* Discuss how and why understanding a communities' language is important to the interaction and a sense of belonging with members.

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#### Read:

Mirabelli, Tony. "Learning to Serve: The Language and Literacy of Food Service Workers." What They Don't Learn in School. Ed. Jabari Mahiri. New York: Peter Lang, 2004. 143-62. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 538)

#### Discuss:

1. Write about your first job or volunteer experience. Consider the following questions: What was it like learning to do the job? What did you learn about the work or the people? Was the job difficult? Why or why not? What was the lexis of that job? How did the lexis and genres that you used in this job helped you do this job? Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **My First Job by Sunday before 11:00 p.m. Reply to one other student post by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Then, refer to the above post. What strategies do you now know that could influence your approach in a future job? Consider what you learned about your co-workers, managers, or various texts needed to complete the job. Will you navigate a new workplace the same or will you change your strategies? What can you do to learn the lexis and genres of a future job? Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Successful Workplace Interactions by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Three: How Do You Gain Authority in a Discourse Community?

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### Outcomes:

* Students will understand how to examine discourses and texts of various communities.

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* Refer to Tony Mirabelli's article "Learning to Serve: The Language and Literacy of Food Service Workers" and discuss how working in a restaurant presents many opportunities to use language and interact with texts.
* Refer to the online discussion post called Successful Workplace Interactions, make a list of the lexis and genres students mentioned in the online discussions.
* Discuss other work environments that could and do present challenges to a newcomer.
* Discuss how being in college requires students to understand a new lexis. How is this process similar to what Mirabelli suggests in his article?
* Think about what writing processes might be like in the work place and how do those processes differ from school writing processes?

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#### Read:

Wardle, Elizabeth. "Identity, Authority, and Learning to Write in New Workplaces." Enculturation 5.2 (2004): n.pag. Web. 18 Feb. 2010. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 520)

#### Discuss:

1. Think of a discourse community where you are an expert. What will novices need to do to gain authority as writers in your community? What will they have to know about the lexis, genres and writing processes or your community? Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Helping Newcomers by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. First, go to Youtube and watch the ABC News video where President Bill Clinton apologizes to the nation for lying about the Monica Lewinsky affair. Then, determine if he conveys authority through words, phrases, tone, and delivery. Find a place in his speech where his tone or delivery did or didn't grant him authority. How might specific audiences react differently to the his tone or delivery? Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Conveying Authority by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Four: What is Ethnographic Research?

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### Outcomes:

* Students understand how to conduct and analyze ethnographic research.

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|  | In Class: |

* Discuss and define what is meant by ethnographic research and why doing ethnographic research would be helpful if you were learning to write in a new discourse community.
* Refer to Wardle's article, "Identity, Authority, and Learning to Write in New Workplaces." What research methods did the author use? What data did she collect and analyze and why.
* Discuss research strategies for students to adopt for this unit's writing assignment.
* Write interview questions that students can use to talk an expert or a newcomer in a given discourse community. Now go home and do the interview.

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#### Read:

There is no reading assigned this week to give you time to conduct your research.

#### Discuss:

1. After conducting an interview with either a newcomer or an old timer, summarize and analyze what you learned about a particular discourse community. Specifically what did you learn about what they write and what they communicate? Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Conducting Research by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Review one of your peer's posts. Then reply to what they learned from the interviewing process. What did they learn that you didn't? What could you have asked differently? Or what would you recommend to your peer that was successful for you? **Post your reply under their original post by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Five: Peer Review

**Note to the Instructor: Suggested major writing assignments for this unit are available on pages 574-577 in Writing about Writing.**

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### Outcomes:

* Students will peer review their paper online and in class to revise and edit their unit writing assignment.

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|  | In Class: |

Have students bring in a draft of their unit writing assignment. Conduct a peer review workshop with guided directions.

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|  | Online: |

#### Read:

There are no readings this week, because students are writing and revising.

#### Discuss:

1. First post a new version of your draft in the discussion board under **Drafting Discourses by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Then, review the paper directly below yours. First identify the main claims the writer makes. If they don't make any claims about their findings, suggest a couple the writer could consider. Then, look closely at how the writer incorporates evidence for those claims. As well as mentioning the writer's claims, consider the following questions when responding to a peer's draft:
	* Where does the writer incorporate evidence to support their claims?
	* Does the writer summarize and analyze their data? Specifically refer to a place in the draft where both are happening. If they do not analyze, where in the draft does this need to be addressed or strengthened?
	* If they do not have any evidence in their draft, what could they use to substantiate their claims?
	* What one suggestion do you have for how the writer can improve their draft? **Post your reply by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**

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# Understanding and Joining Academic Communities

**Note to the Instructor: Select this unit on discourse communities or the unit on How Communities Shape Writing**

This unit discusses how universities and colleges are made up of multiple and specialized distinct discourse communities. A discourse community is a group of people who use language distinctively or differently. Ever wonder why writing an essay in history is different from biology and different again in your writing class? It is because different disciplines construct knowledge and language differently. There is no one magic formula that you can apply to writing in all of your classes and succeed.

So this unit analyzes how language practices differ from one academic discipline to another. In order to succeed in college, students need to learn how to communicate and navigate in multiple disciplines. We will also learn and discuss how students can gain authority an academic discourse communities. There are skills and strategies you can use to interact in each course to help you succeed in the writing that you do throughout your college experience. Instead of guessing about what the professor wants, you can learn to recognize multiple approaches and begin developing strategies to navigate your college career successfully.

* All the readings and supplemental material for this unit are available in the text Writing about Writing by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs.
* Suggested major writing assignments for this unit are available on pages 712-717 in Writing about Writing.
* All the outcomes from this unit are found in Chapter Five in Writing about Writing pg. 580

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## Week One: How is the University Like a City?

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### Outcomes:

* Students will understand how discourse is used in the university.
* Students will understand how and why discourse conventions differ across disciplines.

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|  | In Class: |

* Discuss how college classes require students to use language and genres in various ways (how do biology expectations differ from history?)
* Refer to either the power point on Writing with Authority or Swales's article and determine why it is important to understand how our approach to writing in a particular discourse determines our success. Click here: [writing with authority.pptx](https://www.coursesites.com/bbcswebdav/xid-2507536_1)
* Hand out the major writing assignment for this unit and discuss how the activities and referenced outcomes will help write the paper.

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#### Read:

Swales, John. "The Concept of Discourse Community." Genre Analysis: English in Academic and Research Settings. Boston: Cambridge Up, 1990. 21-32. Print. (also available in Writing about Writing pg. 466)

Harris, Joseph. "The Idea of Community in the Study of Writing." College Composition and Communication 40.1 (1989): 11-22. Print. (also available in Writing about Writing pg. 581)

#### Discuss:

1. First, make a list of at least five languages you use, academic or otherwise. These are the voices that you speak or write in, the ways of thinking and seeing the world that you take on. They might change based on where you are, who you are with, or what you are doing. For example the language you use to speak to your parents differs from the ones you use with your friends or teachers. How do you use language differently when you text, write an e-mail, or write an essay in class?

After making your list, consider how these languages compete with one another. Which ones seem the most important? Do these languages sometimes overlap? How do the non-academic languages conflict with the academic languages? How have past teachers treated these non-academic languages in the classroom? Use at least two specific examples from your own experience to make your point. Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Using Languages by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**

1. Then read at least two other student posts. Collectively, what do these three reflections have to say about the role of competing discourses in students' lives? Is there room for traditionally non-academic languages in the university? Do your classmates feel there is a conflict with languages or are there sometimes overlaps? Why or why not? Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Language Reflections by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Two: What Does it Mean to Have Authority in an Academic Setting?

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### Outcomes:

* Students will acquire tools for analyzing the discourses and genres of various communities (including the university).
* Students will understand knowledge of disciplines' language and discourses as a way of being heard.

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|  | In Class: |

* Refer to Joseph Harris's article and discuss how an academic environment calls for navigating multiple discourse requirements
* Refer to the online discussion Using Language and discuss the competing languages students identified and how those different languages posed issues for the academic classroom.
* Identify strategies students could use in the future to negotiate conflicts between academic and non-academic languages.

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#### Read:

Penrose, Ann M. and Cheryl Geisler. "Reading and Writing without Authority." College Composition and Communication 45.4 (1994): 505-20. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 602)

#### Discuss:

1. First, analyze a research paper you have written recently for this class or another you are currently taking. Consider the following: How often do you refer to authors by name? How often do you refer to the information from a source as a claim? How often do you acknowledge disagreeing with a source? How often do you distinguish the differences between sources? How often do you create your own ideas? How often do you merely agree or restate an existing position or source? After analyzing, consider your overall sense of authority in the piece. Use examples or evidence from the paper to support your opinion. Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Gaining Authority by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.** (This activity has been adapted from Writing about Writing pg. 617)
2. Next, read through several of your peers' posts. Reply to one post and determine how your sense of authority is similar or different. Then, give three concrete suggestions that both of you could follow for your next research project. **Post your reply under the original post by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Three: How Does Writing Differ from Class to Class?

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### Outcomes:

* Students will understand how and why discourse conventions differ across disciplines.
* Students will understand knowledge of disciplines' language and discourses as a way of being heard.

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|  | In Class: |

* Discuss why students are asked to write in college. Then, discuss how students think professors would answer the same question.
* Refer to Penrose and Geisler's article "Reading and Writing without Authority" and discuss how students can achieve academic authority in their writing.
* Review and discuss the online discussion board post Gaining Authority and specifically address the concrete suggestions students made for approaching a new research project.

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#### Read:

McCarthy, Lucille P. "A Stranger in Strange Lands: A College Student Writing Across the Curriculum." Research in the Teaching of English 21.3 (1987): 233-65. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 667)

### Discuss:

1. Look at your syllabi, assignments, text books, e-mails, notes, and essays from the classes in which you are currently enrolled in. If you are only enrolled in one class, you can use materials from previous semesters or high school classes. Then, consider three of the following questions: How did you know what the writing guidelines were? How did you interact with the teacher? What kinds of comments did the teacher make about your essays? How did you interact with other classmates? Did you gain authority in this particular class? Why or why not? Write a two hundred word post that answers three of the above questions and post in the discussion board under **Learning to Navigate by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Reply to one other peer's post and identify what can be said about the social context of a class and how it affects a student's written performance and ability to gain authority as a writer in a given class. **Post your reply under the original student post by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Four: How I Make Myself Heard as a College Writer

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### Outcomes:

* Students will understand how discourse is used in the university.
* Students will understand knowledge of disciplines' language and discourses as a way of being heard in the university.
* Students will begin preparing for this unit's writing assignment.

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|  | In Class: |

* Refer to McCarthy's article and the online discussion board then discuss why analyzing the "social context" of each class is important to how students will adjust and succeed in a given classroom.
* Refer to the Learning to Navigate online responses and discuss what various texts say about the course, the professor, and student expectations
* Write interview questions that students can use to interview each other in order to explore a more in depth conversation about how to navigate an academic discourse.
* Interview one classmate and discuss their academic experiences. Try and relate their experiences to the claims the authors have made in this unit. Be sure to discuss how their writing differs from class to class and why they believe that is the case.

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#### Read:

* There is no assigned reading this week because you are working on your unit writing assignment.

#### Discuss:

1. Using the interview conducted in class, analyze what you have learned about writing in an academic environment and how your peers gain authority in their writing. Then, write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Interviewing a Classmate by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Using the readings and what you have learned from fellow students in this class, give some specific advice to incoming freshmen in order for them to write successfully in college. Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Giving Advice to Freshmen by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Five: Peer Review

**Note to Instructor: Suggested major writing assignments for this unit are available on pages 712-717 in Writing about Writing.**

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### Outcomes:

* Students will peer review their paper online and in class to revise and edit their unit writing assignment.

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|  | In Class: |

Have students bring in a draft of their unit writing assignment. Conduct a peer review workshop with guided directions.

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|  | Online: |

#### Read:

There are no readings this week, because students are writing and revising.

#### Discuss:

1. First post a new version of your draft in the discussion board under **Drafting Academic Discourses by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Then, review the paper directly below yours. First identify the main claims the writer makes. If they don't make any claims about their findings, suggest a couple the writer could consider. Then, look closely at how the writer incorporates evidence for those claims. As well as mentioning the writer's claims, consider the following questions when responding to a peer's draft:
	* Where does the writer incorporate evidence to support their claims?
	* Does the writer summarize and analyze their data? Specifically refer to a place in the draft where both are happening. If they do not analyze, where in the draft does this need to be addressed or strengthened?
	* If they do not have any evidence in their draft, what could they use to substantiate their claims?
	* What one suggestion do you have for how the writer can improve their draft? **Post your reply by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**

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# How Do Readers Read and Writers Write?

The purpose of this unit is for you to learn how to read critically, to think about writing practices and processes, and to understand that discourse communities have specific and varied ways of communicating.

Not only will we discuss writing strategies, but we will practice applying those strategies when writing small and large assignments. Some of the readings in this course can be challenging. They require you to read critically.

Most of you really don't like to read. Teachers know that. However, reading is a requirement at a university or college, so it is necessary to develop skills which will help you understand difficult texts in order to succeed in college. This class will prepare you for approaching difficult texts in other college classes.

* All the readings for this unit are available in the text Writing about Writing by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs.
* Suggested major writing assignments for this unit are available on pages 165-169 in Writing about Writing.
* The outcomes in this unit are taken from Chapter One (pg. 36) in Writing about Writing.

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## Week One: How Readers Understand a Text

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### Outcomes:

* Students will investigate how readers interpret text and construct meaning
* Students will investigate what it means to read critically

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|  | In Class: |

* Discuss what ideas and attitudes about writing could be misconceptions.
* Discuss strategies for how to read critically.
* Hand out the major writing assignment for this unit and discuss how the activities and referenced outcomes will help write the paper.

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|  | Online: |

#### Read:

Swales, John. "Create a Research Space" (CARS) Model of Research Introductions" adapted from John. M. Swales's Genre Analysis : English in Academic and Research Settings . Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1990. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 6)

Williams, Joseph, "The Phenomenology of Error." College Composition and Communication 32.2 (1981):152-68. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 37)

Kleine, Michael "What Is It We Do When We Write Articles Like This One--and How Can We Get Students to join Us?" The Writing Instructor 6 (1987):151-61.Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 22)

#### Discuss:

1. Click on the following link to get to NPR's web site [www.npr.org](http://www.npr.org) . In the search box type "This I Believe." When you connect to the next page, scroll down and look for "Best Bets." Click Best Bets and you will see a list of essays. All these essays are personal testimonies of what everyday people value and believe in. They are short, so click on a few and read. Then, write your own two hundred word "This I Believe" essay and post in the discussion Board under, **This I Believe by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.** Respond to one other post as time permits. This assignment also helps you to get to know who is in the class, so commenting and making connections in this board is important.
2. Next, make a list of common errors that past teachers have brought to your attention. Do you see yourself as a "good" or "poor" writer and why? Write a two hundred word response discussing how knowing your "errors" affects how you feel about writing and post in the discussion board under, **How I See MyWriting by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.** Reply to one other classmate's post to keep the discussion lively. **Your reply is due by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**

**When replying to your peers, make sure you challenge their responses (in a respectful way).**

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## Week Two: Strategies for Reading Difficult Texts

**Click here for a power point that gives additional strategies for reading critically:** [critical reading and responding to texts.pptx](https://www.coursesites.com/bbcswebdav/xid-2507534_1)

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### Outcomes:

* Students will investigate how writers construct text persuasively.
* Students will investigate social constructs and how they influence meaning of a text.

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|  | In Class: |

* Refer to Kleine's article, "What Is It We Do When We Write Articles Like This One?" and Swales's handout and discuss how scholars make three strategic moves when they present a claim.
* Discuss varied social constructs and refer to Williams's article "The Phenomenology of Error." How are "errors" in writing considered to be social constructs? Refer to the discussion board assignment where students list errors and respond to whether they see themselves as "good" writers. How do the responses to the previous question relate to what Williams claims?
* Discuss how reading critically requires not only certain strategies but acknowledgment that meaning in a text can vary from reader to reader.

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#### Read:

Haas, Christina and Linda Flower, "Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning." College Composition and Communication 39.2 (1988):167-83. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 120)

#### Discuss:

1. Select a social construct that was discussed in class (an example is plagiarism) or another one you are familiar with. First, define the social construct in your own words. Then, find a current article or text that represents the construct differently from your definition. Do not use the dictionary or Wikipedia for the counter definition. Consider the multiple sets of values that surround this construct. For example, how and why might teachers or students define plagiarism differently? Write a two hundred word response that discusses the differences each definition presents and post in the discussion board under **Looking at Constructs by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.** Make sure you reply to one other post to move the discussion forward. **Your reply is due by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Next, consider a subject where you are an expert. Is it volleyball, golf, baseball, a campus organization, or Facebook? Now, imagine that your audience has little knowledge or interest in your topic. Your goal is to get the audience interested in your topic. How will you accomplish this? Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Getting the Audience Interested by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Three: How Writers Construct Texts

**Click here to read more about Rhetorical Situations:** [**rhetorical situation.pptx**](https://www.coursesites.com/bbcswebdav/xid-2507535_1)

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### Outcomes:

* Students will investigate the concept of the rhetorical situation and be able to apply it to writing and reading situations.

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|  | In Class: |

* Refer to Haas and Flower's article, "Rhetorical Reading Strategies and the Construction of Meaning" and discuss the student responses to Getting the Audience Interested. What strategies did students use to get their audience interested in their subject where they are an expert? What strategies do Haas and Flower suggest that were relevant to this assignment?
* Discuss what is meant by a rhetorical situation. What does that mean for the reader? What does that mean for the writer?
* Discuss how advertisements are examples of rhetorical situations.

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#### Read:

Grant-Davie, Keith. "Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents." Rhetoric Review 15.2 (1997): 264-79. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 101)

#### Discuss:

1. Click on the following link <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/> to find the American Rhetoric web site. Once there, find your favorite speech. Consider the following questions. Who was the audience? What was the speaker's exigence? What was the purpose of the speech? What constraints or obstacles do you think the speaker encountered? What does the audience value? Write a two hundred word analysis that considers the rhetorical situation and post your response in the discussion board under **American Rhetoric.Your post is due by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.** Reply to one other post. Find a post you disagree with (if possible). **This reply is due by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Next, write a note (that can be sent via e-mail) to your parents who are apprehensive about freshmen taking online courses. Give reasons that will help convince your parents not to worry about you passing this course. Write this note and post your e-mail in the discussion board under **Convincing the Parents by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
3. Ok. Now you finally convinced your parents that online courses can be highly successful, but all the sections are full for next term. Write a memo that can be sent via e-mail requesting that the Chair of the Writing Department open more online courses. How will you persuade this individual? Write this memo and post your response in the discussion board under **Convincing the Chair by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Four: How to Apply the Rhetorical Situation

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### Outcomes:

* Students will investigate the concept of rhetorical situation and be able to apply it to writing and reading situations.

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|  | In Class: |

* Refer to Grant-Davie's article "Rhetorical Situations and Their Constituents" and discuss the two e-mails students wrote in the discussion board. How are the exigencies different? How are the constraints different? How did students appeal differently to their parents versus the Chair of the Writing Program?
* Discuss the exigence students will have for the first writing assignment.
* Discuss possible constraints in the first writing assignment.
* Discuss strategies for appealing to the audience.

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#### Read:

* Click here to link to the article "Why Women Aren't Funny" by Christopher Hitchens <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/features/2007/01/hitchens200701>
* Click here to link to an article responding to the above article: <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/features/2008/04/funnygirls200804>
* Click here to read the final response of the original article: <http://www.vanityfair.com/culture/features/2008/04/hitchens200804>

#### Discuss:

1. First, after reading all three of the above articles, discuss what Hitchens' possible purpose was in writing the original piece. Find examples or phrases that point to where Hitchens' purpose could be confusing to his audience. Do you think Hitchens achieved his purpose? Why or Why not? How do the response articles support your opinion? Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **What was Hitchens' thinking? by Sunday before 11:00 p.m. Reply to one other post by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Write the first three paragraphs of your first writing assignment. Post your paragraphs in the discussion board under **First Draft.** Then, reply to one other classmate's early draft. Make one suggestion for improvement. **Reply by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Five: Peer Review

**Note to the Instructor: Suggested major writing assignments for this unit are available on pages 165-169 in Writing about Writing.**

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### Outcomes:

* Students will peer review their paper online and in class to revise and edit their unit writing assignment.

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|  | In Class: |

Have students bring in a draft of their unit writing assignment. Conduct a peer review workshop with guided directions.

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|  | Online: |

#### Read:

There is no assigned reading this week because students are writing and drafting.

#### Discuss:

1. First post a new version of your draft in the discussion board under **Drafting An Analysis by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.** Then, review the paper directly below yours. Consider the following questions when responding to a peer's draft.
	* Where in the draft does the writer explain how meaning is constructed in multiple ways from a single text? How can this explanation be clarified or enhanced?
	* Where does the writer discuss how the rhetor engages the audience with a directed purpose?
	* If there is no discussion of the rhetor's purpose, where in the draft should the writer consider introducing this idea?
	* Where does the writer discuss the constraints the rhetor may have encountered? Is this discussion effective? Why or why not?
	* **Post your reply to your peer's draft by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**

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# Writing Processes and Practices

This unit looks at how people write. We will analyze and reflect about the actual writing process. What do you think about when you are asked to complete a writing assignment? Do you outline? Make multiple drafts? Listen to music? Surf the Internet? Are you aware of the habits and behaviors you encounter when you write? Do you think any of these approaches will make a difference in the final writing product?

As writers, we can acquire an awareness, as well as particular skills, which can improve our writing. Many students believe those who write well have a gift, a natural born talent. This just is not true. A few may have a gift, like a natural born athlete. But even the best of athletes need to practice their skills to rise to the top. So, this unit attempts to unveil the secret successes of good writing. There is not one formula for all writing and not every suggestion works for every person. Hopefully, you will gain a deeper insight into the process and acquire some skills that might work to improve your writing abilities.

We will read from contemporary writers and hear what they have to say about their writing processes. You will also develop a vocabulary to begin effectively talking about the writing process. Then, you will analyze your own strategies.

* All the readings and supplemental material for this unit are available in the text Writing about Writing by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs.
* Suggested major writing assignments for this unit are available on pages 322-327 in Writing about Writing.
* All the outcomes from this unit are found in Chapter Two in Writing about Writing, pg. 173.

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## Week One: How Do Others Write?

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### Outcomes:

* Students will acquire vocabulary for talking about the writing processes and themselves as writers.

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|  | In Class: |

* Discuss the current process students take when writing a paper for class.
* Define the concept of genre.
* Discuss how the writing process works for different genres.
* Hand out the major writing assignment for this unit and discuss how the activities and referenced outcomes will help write the paper.

### Read:

Perl, Sondra. "The Composing Process of Unskilled College Writers." Research in the Teaching of English 13.4(1979):317-36. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 191)

Lamott, Anne. "Shitty First Drafts." Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life. New York: Anchor, 1994. 21-27. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 301)

### Discuss:

1. First, go to Songwriters on Process or click here for the link: <http://www.writersonprocess.com/>. Click on some of your favorite musicians and read the interviews of their composing process. Next, go to the web site New York Times Writers on Writing. Select one writer (perhaps your favorite) who discusses the writing process. Consider how song writers and fiction writers compose differently: in other words do different genres affect the composing process? What similarities and differences do each talk about? Do they do anything when composing that might help your own writing process? Then in the discussion board under **How do Musicians and Writers Compose** write a two hundred word analysis that addresses the questions above.  **Post your response by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Next, refer to Anne Lamott's "Shitty First Drafts" and consider the following questions. Do song writers and other writers you just read do what Lamott suggests in her article? Do you do what Lamott suggests when you are composing? Write a 200 hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **Lamott's Advice by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Two: How Do *You* Write?

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### Outcomes:

* Students will understand that writing and research is a process that requires planning, incubation, revision, and collaboration.

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|  | In Class: |

* Refer to Perl's "The Composing Process of Unskilled College Writers" and discuss how students sometimes confuse editing and revising. What "old" processes work for them and what new processes might they consider adapting for their next assignment?
* Discuss the advice students learned when reading about song writers and other professional writers. Make a list of the multiple activities in which writers engage. Then discuss which ones are most valued or followed by students. What activities are students reluctant to follow and why?
* Consider how students own writing process differs when writing in different genres.

### Read:

Rose, Mike. "Rigid Rules, Inflexible Plans, and the Stifling of Language: A Cognitivist Analysis of Writer's Block." College Composition and Communication 31.4 (1980): 389-401. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 236)

### Discuss:

1. After reading Rose's article, consider if you have ever experienced "writer's block." Describe how and when this happens when you write. Are there "rules" past writing teachers have imposed that prevent you from getting your thoughts down on paper? If so, identify those rules and discuss how they interfere in your writing process. If you have never experienced writer's block, discuss why. How do you keep your thoughts fluid? Write a two hundred word response to these questions and post in the discussion board under **"Writer's Block: To Be or To Not Be" by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Next create a writing log that will record all the writing you do in a week. Then, next to the writing activity, identify all the various parts or the writing process you considered or used (planning, drafting, revising, editing). Carry this log with you wherever you go. Record the specific writing task, note the different genres, and all the processes that went along with the task. Texting, instant messaging, Facebook, Twitter, and grocery lists all count as writing along with class notes, e-mails, and letters. (This activity comes from Writing about Writing pg. 235)

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## Week Three: How Can You Change Your Writing Process?

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### Outcomes:

* Students will investigate how they might consider new approaches to writing in order to have a better final outcome.

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|  | In Class: |

* Refer to Rose's article and discuss what "rules" impede student writing. Make a list and compare with the list Rose suggests.
* Discuss strategies for avoiding rules or obstacles that prevent students from drafting or beginning an assignment.
* Discuss the writing log and have students write an in class response to their findings. What did they spend the most time writing? Where did students write? Has their impression of how much writing they do in a week changed? Are there genres or certain contexts in which you do not experience writer's block? Why do you think this is?
* Create a chart or graph in class that breaks out class percentages or the process. For example, how much time does the class spend drafting, planning, editing, revising, thinking? Explain how this data can be incorporated into their final writing assignment for this unit.

### Read:

Berkenkotter, Carol. "Decisions and Revisions: The Planning Strategies of a Publishing Writer." College Composition and Communication 34.2 (1983): 156-69. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 216)

Murray, Donald. "Response of a Laboratory Rat - or, Being Protocoled." College Composition and Communication 34.2 (1983): 169-72. Print. (also found in Writing about Writing pg. 216)

### Discuss:

1. After reading Berkenkotter and Murray, compare the writing environment for two different writing tasks that you identified in your log, preferably a school task and some other task. Consider the following questions: Do you write to music? What types of music? Do you need a quiet space? Do you write with the TV blaring? Do you think the environment plays a vital role in your writing success? Why or why not? Write a two hundred word analysis and post in the discussion board under **My Writing Environment by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Now, think about the last paper you wrote for either this class or another. Discuss your writing process. Did you write an entire first draft before revising? When did you revise? How exactly did you revise? When did you edit the paper? Did the introduction have to be perfect before you moved forward? What do you **now consider** to be the most important part of the process for you? Is this the same process you use for something you write outside of class? Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **My Writing Process by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Four: Who Has Influenced My Views on Writing?

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### Outcomes:

* Students will analyze their own writing process in conjunction with what other professional writers have said.
* Students will assess what processes could be the most effective and attempt to shift their writing practices.

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|  | In Class: |

* Refer to Berkenkotter's "Decisions and Revisions: The Planning Strategies of a Publishing Writer" and discuss the online responses students posted in My Writing Environment and My Writing Process.
* Create possible interview questions that students could use to explore how a fellow classmate goes about the writing process. Have students formulate the questions using any of the claims they have learned from the writers in this unit (i.e. what writers have said about writer's block, revision, planning, the environment, etc.).
* Then have students interview one other classmate. Make sure students take notes and keep the answers to their questions.

### Read:

George Orwell's "Why I Write." Click on the following link to find the article: <http://orwell.ru/library/essays/wiw/english/e_wiw>

### Discuss:

1. Using the interview you conducted in class, consider what you have learned or gained from hearing how another student composes. Specifically, discuss how do your strategies differ from your classmate? How are they similar? Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **How Others Compose by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. After reading Orwell's "Why I Write" compare your writing history to Orwell's. What similarities and differences do you observe? What additionally did you learn about the writing process from reading this article? Write a two hundred word response and post in the discussion board under **My Writing History by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**

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## Week Five: Peer Review

**Note to the Instructor: Suggested major writing assignments for this unit are available on pages 322-327 in Writing about Writing.**

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### Outcomes:

* Students will peer review their paper online and in class to revise and edit their unit writing assignment.

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|  | In Class: |

Have students bring in a draft of their unit writing assignment. Conduct a peer review workshop with guided directions.

### Read:

There are no readings this week, because students are writing and revising.

### Discuss:

1. First post a new version of your draft in the discussion board under **Drafting Writing Processes by Sunday before 11:00 p.m.**
2. Then, review the paper directly below yours. First identify the main claims the writer makes. Then, look closely at how the writer incorporates “evidence” for those claims. Consider the following questions when responding to a peer's draft:
* When they refer to an author, do they introduce the source effectively?
* Give an example in the draft where the quotes and paraphrasing flow naturally. Identify places in the draft where a source reads as though it has just been thrown in?
* Where does the writer follow up with an example to support or clarify why the evidence was used in the essay?
* Where does the writer discuss how their writing processes are similar or different from the established writer?
* What suggestions do you have for how the writer can improve integrating sources? **Post your reply by Monday before 11:00 p.m.**

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