

Learning goals for first-year writing (wpacouncil.org)

This statement describes the common knowledge, skills, and attitudes sought by first-year composition programs in American postsecondary education. By the end of first-year composition, students should:

Rhetorical Knowledge

- Focus on a purpose
- Respond to the needs of different audiences
- Respond appropriately to different kinds of rhetorical situations
- Use conventions of format and structure appropriate to the rhetorical situation
- Adopt appropriate voice, tone, and level of formality
- Understand how genres shape reading and writing
- Write in several genres

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing

- Use writing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating
- Understand a writing assignment as a series of tasks, including finding, evaluating, analyzing, and synthesizing appropriate primary and secondary sources
- Integrate their own ideas with those of others
- Understand the relationships among language, knowledge, and power

Processes

- Be aware that it usually takes multiple drafts to create and complete a successful text
- Develop flexible strategies for generating, revising, editing, and proof-reading
- Understand writing as an open process that permits writers to use later invention and re-thinking to revise their work
- Understand the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
- Learn to critique their own and others' works
- Learn to balance the advantages of relying on others with the responsibility of doing their part
- Use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences

Knowledge of Conventions

- Learn common formats for different kinds of texts
- Develop knowledge of genre conventions ranging from structure and paragraphing to tone and mechanics
- Practice appropriate means of documenting their work
- Control such surface features as syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Composing in Electronic Environments

As has become clear over the last twenty years, writing in the 21st-century involves the use of digital technologies for several purposes, from drafting to peer reviewing to editing. Therefore, although the kinds of composing processes and texts expected from students vary across programs and institutions, there are nonetheless common expectations.

By the end of first-year composition, students should:

- Use electronic environments for drafting, reviewing, revising, editing, and sharing texts
- Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g., federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet sources
- Understand and exploit the differences in the rhetorical strategies and in the affordances available for both print and electronic composing processes and texts

SCU Core 2009 Critical Thinking and Writing 1 and 2
Description and Objectives (excerpts)

<http://cms.scu.edu/provost/ugst/core2009/wordoc/upload/CTW-Objectives-Jan-18.doc>

In this sequence, students will engage in an intensive practice of writing as inquiry, reflection, and communication. Students will develop their thinking and writing through substantive revision as they work with faculty who model ways of reading, writing, and research.

Overall Learning Goals

Critical Thinking: The ability to identify, reflect upon, evaluate, integrate, and apply different types of information and knowledge to form independent judgments. Students experience writing and other critical thinking processes as a way to learn.

Complexity: An approach to understanding the world that appreciates ambiguity and nuance as well as clarity and precision. Critical thinking and writing requires awareness of historical, cultural, and social contexts and further requires sensitivity to cultural difference.

Communication: Interacting effectively with different audiences, especially through writing, speech, and second language. Critical thinking and writing require students to contextualize their own ideas and the ideas of others through rhetorical analysis, logical reasoning, and information literacy.

Minimum objectives: at the end of CTW 1, students will

- Read and write with a critical point of view that displays depth of thought and is mindful of the rhetorical situation
- Write essays that contain well-supported, arguable theses and that demonstrate personal engagement and clear purpose
- Reflect on and/or analyze the rhetorical differences, both constraints and possibilities, of different modes of presentation
- Reflect on the writing process as a mode of thinking and learning that can be generalized across a range of writing and thinking tasks

At the end of CTW 2, students will

- Read and write with a critical point of view that demonstrates greater depth of thought and a more thorough understanding of the rhetorical situation than in CTW 1
- Write research-based essays that contain well-supported arguable theses and that demonstrate personal engagement and clear purpose
- Independently and deliberately locate, select, and appropriately use and cite evidence that is ample, credible, and smoothly integrated into an intellectually honest argument
- Analyze the rhetorical differences, both constraints and possibilities, of different modes of presentation
- Reflect more deeply than in CTW 1 upon the writing process as a mode of thinking and learning that can be generalized across a range of writing and thinking tasks