

# Why I Write/Why They Write: English 1101 Pilot Fall 2024

## Assignment 1: Why Do I Write?

### Introduction:

We all spend a lot of time writing. We write for different reasons and in different situations. From essays and school assignments to emails to journaling to text messages to social media posts, we engage with many of these writing tasks daily. We do some kinds of writing more frequently than others, and we like some kinds of writing more than others. Likely, you already know which kinds of writing you like the most. Likely, you are already an expert on a certain kind of writing. Everyone has reasons for writing that they can share with an audience, and sharing these reasons gives occasion to establish our identities as writers.

### Purpose:

Answer the question: why do I write? Articulate your reasons for writing. Explore and reflect on your experiences as a writer.

### Audience:

Your audience is readers who likely have similar experiences as you and a similar desire to find out this answer for themselves. Your audience knows about many kinds of writing but does not know about your specific experience with writing or why you write.

### Process:

- Keep a record: Between now and the next class meeting, keep a record of any reading or writing that you do (and I mean ANY kind). Next to the kind of writing or reading you list, record why you are doing it or who you are doing it for. Are you reading an article for class? Scrolling through Instagram posts? Writing in your journal? Which kinds of reading and writing do you like best? Which do you like least?
- Reflect: Think about all the kinds of writing that you do and make a list. Which ones do you do the most? Why? Which ones do you like the best? Why? What are the important moves that you must do to be successful with that piece of writing? Who do you write for?
- Select your subject: From your list, decide on one kind of writing that you would like to focus on. Why do you want to write about this?
- Plan: As you think about the kinds of writing that you do, the reasons that you do it, and the specific situations you find yourself writing in, take notes. The best way to prepare for a writing project is to take notes along the way.
- Think about your audience: Who is your audience? What kinds of writing experience do you think they have? What can you share about writing that might enlighten them

about your own experience, and make them think about their own? What do you think your audience's attitudes towards writing are? What do you think they might already know? What information about writing do they need to know?

- Draft: Compose your answer to "Why Do I Write?" Revise and edit as you see fit.

### Peer Review & Reflection:

- Exchange with a partner: Do you have experience with the kind of writing, or the reason for writing? Are you reading about a completely new writing experience? What details about writing does the author include? What details about writing are missing?
- Think of a better way: What could be done differently? What could be said differently? Where would you most appreciate an example or explanation?
- Think of an even better way: Is there a different way to answer this question? What is another modality that you might use to answer this question? Could you illustrate this story? How might images strengthen this piece? Given total freedom to answer this question, what would you do?
- Return the paper to the author: What are the specific changes you will make to address the feedback you received from your reader? List at least two things.

### Final Draft & Reflection:

- What did you learn as you crafted this piece?
- What did you find easiest about crafting this piece? What was the most challenging?
- What worked and what didn't work as you experimented with this piece?
- How did you make decisions about your piece? How did you decide to make changes to your piece?

### Extension Activities:

- After everyone turns in their essays, summarize your answer to the question "Why do I write?" in a single sentence. Create a class list of reasons. Share the list with the whole class. Who has similar reasons? Who has different reasons? Whose reasons are particularly rhetorical?
- Is there a better way to convey this story? Could you create a presentation, a comic strip, a how-to guide? What else?
- Continue recording the kinds of reading and writing activities that you do throughout the semester, and why you do them.

### Grading & Rubric

- Double spaced, MLA formatting, 12-point font, Times New Roman. Piece is free of spelling and grammar errors.
- Clear introduction that addresses why you write.
- Clear sense of purpose and audience in your writing.

- -Compelling and appropriate evidence from your past.
- -Specific details and effective storytelling.
- -A coherent organizational structure that supports your focus.
- Body paragraphs provide supporting evidence and examples of why you write.
- Conclusion
- Final Draft Reflection

## Assignment 2: Why Do They Write?

### Introduction:

Now that you have explored the reasons why you write, you will now get curious about why someone else writes. This might be someone that you know well, or it might be someone that you know in a professional or academic capacity (a boss, a professor, a former teacher, a professional that you respect). The person that you write about will most likely be a stranger to your audience.

### Purpose:

The purpose of this piece is to describe a person to your audience based on your own observations, an interview, and a small amount of research. Describe your findings from primary research to your audience.

### Audience:

Curious people who are looking for insights into why other people write.

### Process:

1. Consider your options: Who do you want to find out more about? Why? Do you want to spend time learning about someone that you know very well in a different capacity? Or, do you want to learn about someone new? Maybe you want to know how or why your boss uses writing in her job. Or, maybe there is a professor whose footsteps you wish to follow in or whose research you want to know more about.
2. Conduct an observation: Spend some time observing the person you will write about (try not to be creepy about it). Write down as many observations as you make. Observations should be things that you directly observe, you're not making conclusions about what you see, just writing down what you see. You may also observe while you conduct your interview.
3. Describe: Describe what the person looks like. Describe the details about the person that you observe. Describe what the person does. Describe who the person is. Describe your relationship to the person. Why does the person interest you? Why did you want to write about them?
4. Conduct a small amount of research: Google the person you want to learn about or look up their website. What questions do you have about them? Can you answer the

questions by doing a small amount of research? Which questions can't you answer with secondary research?

1. Talk to them: Why do they write? Make a list of questions based on observations, research, and a burning desire to know why they write. Decide on a time to meet with them. Conduct an interview.
5. Draw conclusions: What conclusions can you draw based on your observations, interview, and a small amount of research? Can you answer the question: Why do they write? Your conclusions should be grounded in the research you have done.
6. Report your findings: Decide what is the best format to present your findings to your audience. Make sure you connect your conclusions to your observations, interview, and other research. Revise and edit as you see fit.

### Peer Review and Reflection:

1. Share with a partner: Talk to your partner about who you chose to write about. Explain to your partner who they are, why you chose to write about them, and why they write.
2. Read one another's writing: Read and make notes. What do you see that the author missed? Why do you think this happened? What conclusions do you draw from this piece? Are there inferences that do not connect to concrete observations or interview materials? Which conclusions seem more likely based on the evidence available? Did the author answer the question: why do they write? Can *you* answer the question: why do they write?
3. Talk with your partner: Share your thoughts with your partner in a discussion. Each of you should make notes on your own piece of writing. What changes will you make to your writing as you revise before you turn in the final draft? List at least two things.

### Final Draft & Reflection:

- What did you learn as you crafted this piece?
- What did you find easiest about crafting this piece? What was the most challenging?
- What worked and what didn't work as you experimented with this piece?
- How did you make decisions about your piece? How did you decide to make changes to your piece?

### Extension Activities:

- After everyone turns in their essays, summarize your answer to the question "Why do they write?" in a single sentence. Create a class list of reasons. Share the list with the whole class. Who has similar reasons? Who has different reasons? Whose reasons are particularly rhetorical? How do the reasons relate to the situation the person is writing in? Which reasons resonate with you the most?
- Is there a better way to convey the message of this piece? Could you create a presentation, write a professional biography for the person, create someone's professional or personal web page?

- Are there ways that why you write and why others write intersect? Are the reasons similar or different? How so? Make a chart that captures these similarities and differences.

### Grading:

- Double spaced, MLA formatting, 12-point font, Times New Roman, Works Cited page with list of references. Piece is free of spelling and grammar errors.
- Appendix with list of interview questions.
- Clear introduction
- Clear sense of purpose and audience in your writing.
- Body paragraphs provide supporting evidence and examples tied directly to the evidence from your observations, interview, and other research.
- A coherent organizational structure that supports your main message.
- Conclusion
- Final draft reflection

# Assignment 3: Why Does X Matter?

## Introduction:

We spend a good deal of time in school. Schools can be places where we are inspired, find purpose and direction, and where it is valuable for us to be. Schools can also be places that make us feel angry or uncomfortable. (Sometimes, school can be all these things.) In this assignment, you will consider something that matters a great deal to you in school and create an argument about why that thing matters, and/or why it should change.

## Purpose:

Take a position on why a kind of writing, a major, minor, skillset, or even a single class matters. Create an argument.

## Audience:

Someone who has the power to make changes at your school (this person might be able to include classes as part of core curriculum, to change the way that we write in school and how much of it we do, or to change policies, etc.) Someone at your own level and trying to decide their major, minor, or what classes to take next semester. Consider the different ways to reach each audience.

## Process:

1. What do you love (or hate)? Make a list of all the things that are important to you about school, or that you love, or that you really do not like. Visualize your day. What is the best part? What do you look forward to the most? What could be better? What is a major problem? Write everything down that you can think of. Try to focus more on procedures, policies, specific fields of study, rather than individuals. What part of school is really helping to prepare you to reach your future goals? What stands in the way?

2. Find your focus: Pick one item from your list. Does it affect multiple people or groups? It should be something that will have a positive impact on you, your fellow students, your entire school.
3. Consider your audience: Who are the different groups this problem affects? Make a list. Which groups seem persuadable? Why? The persuadable group is your audience. Consider their needs, attitudes toward, and knowledge of the subject.
4. Make a case that your chosen topic matters. Write an argument that describes the problem to the best of your ability without looking at other sources. Base this part of your argument on your own experience, but also consider what you know about your audience. What will persuade them that this topic matters?
5. Conduct research: What additional information will improve the argument that you started in step 4? What kind of proof do you need? Find sources that are convincing and authoritative.
6. Find a solution: What is a good solution to the problem? Should all freshmen take a particular class or engage in a kind of writing activity? How will you convince your audience that this is a good solution?
7. Draft your argument: Now that you've done a lot of thinking, brainstorming, and researching, write an argument targeted toward your audience.
8. Revise and edit as you see fit.

### Peer Review and Reflection:

- Find a partner. Briefly share with your partner what your project is about: what matters to you? What did you already know about this topic when you started writing about it? What did you have to research and what kinds of sources did you bring in?

### Final Draft & Reflection:

- What did you learn as you crafted this piece?
- What do you think you are gaining more expertise about?
- What did you find easiest about crafting this piece? What was the most challenging?
- What worked and what didn't work as you experimented with this piece?
- How did you make decisions about your piece? How did you decide to make changes to your piece?

### Grading:

- Instructor approved topic.
- An introduction that articulates why your topic matters, including a thesis that helps orient your readers to the purpose of your paper.
- Detailed evidence, including evidence from two secondary sources, that supports your main claims.
- A coherent organizational structure.
- MLA formatting and MLA works cited page.

### Extension Activities:

- After everyone turns in their essays, summarize the things that matter to everyone in a single sentence. Create a class list. Share the list with the whole class. Are there topics that come up more than once? Which ones? Is there something that you can do to make this change now?
- Is there a better way to convey the message of this piece? Could you create a presentation, make a flyer, write a letter to the editor of the newspaper?

# Final Project: Rewriting/Recomposing

### Introduction:

There are many ways to write and many ways to engage with the writing process. Often, the situation or occasion for writing warrants a specific kind of format. A recomposition reimagines and composes your original piece of writing using a different modality. As you think about different ways to recompose your messages, you will think about delivery. Consider the times this semester where you have thought about if there is a better way to convey the message of your pieces.

### Purpose:

Turn one of your assignments into a multimodal project. Consider: PowerPoint, Canva, flyers, blog posts, Wikipedia posts, pamphlets, instruction manual, recipe, (YouTube) video, podcast episode, comic strip, etc.

### Audience:

Your audience is specific to your modality. Someone who reads blog posts about education, or searches YouTube videos for inspiration for writing will have different expectations and needs.

### Process:

1. Choose your piece: Which writing project did you like best this semester? Why? This might be how you decide on the topic for your recomposition. You might think about other criteria? If so, what criteria are you thinking about?

2. Find your focus: After you decide which writing project you'd like to recompose, think about what kind of modality you'd like to choose. Why choose this modality? What makes this modality the best one to convey the information you have to share? What expectations do audiences of this modality have?
3. Look at models: Once you decide on your modality, look at some models that do similar things to what you want to do. (If you are making a flyer, what elements do all flyers have that yours should have, too? If you are creating a comic, what elements of comics does yours need to have, too?)
4. Do further research: What information do you need to find in order to recompose this piece? What further research do you need to conduct?
5. Recompose your writing project: Make sure that the main message that you want your audience to come away with is clear. Revise and edit as you see fit.

### Reflection:

This is a more formal reflection that should accompany your final project, it should be 1-2 pages in length and follow conventional MLA format. You might address the following questions:

- What project did you recompose? Why did you decide to choose this one?
- Why did you choose the modality that you ended up with?
- What did you learn as you crafted this piece?
- What do you think you are gaining more expertise about?
- What did you find easiest about crafting this piece? What was the most challenging?
- What worked and what didn't work as you experimented with this piece?
- How did you make decisions about your piece? How did you decide to make changes to your piece?

### Grading:

- Reflection Piece:
  - Your introduction captures your thinking about composing the original piece and the recomposition process.
  - You provide evidence from your experience writing both pieces.
  - You use a coherent organizational structure.
  - The reflection piece follows conventional MLA formatting.
- Recomposition Piece:
  - The method of delivery matches the content and message you want to deliver.
  - The recomposition is organized in a coherent way according to the conventions of that modality.
  - The recomposition clearly recomposes a project from this class.