

High School Academic Writing

Instructor: Devon Kelly

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Live Class: Mondays from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. ET

Course Description

High School Academic Writing will help students unearth their opinions and will give students the tools they need to express their ideas in clear academic writing. During the first semester, students will focus on the six-traits of writing on a detailed level while gaining important skills for prewriting, drafting, and revising. Students will then journey through the essay-writing process with support from their instructor and feedback from their peers. Students will master basic essay structure and build confidence throughout the writing process all the way from thesis development to editing as they write according to the three modes of writing—narrative, informative/explanatory, and opinion/argument.

As a class, we will respect the value and creativity of what each student has to say, and through feedback and revision, students will learn how to write exactly what they mean. By the end of the year, students will have written a persuasive essay, a personal narrative essay, an explanatory synthesis essay, and an argumentative essay in addition to weekly writing prompts.

Required Texts

The Elements of Style by Strunk and White, Fourth Edition, ISBN-10 9780205309023

Additional mentor texts, such as scholarly articles and short stories, will be provided in Canvas.

Course Structure

We will meet weekly for interactive live classes. Students may expect the following elements in Canvas:

- Mentor texts including sample academic pieces as well as short stories and poetry
- Editing assignments to practice conventions
- Discussion boards
- Prewriting submissions due as prerequisites for formal writing assignments
- Writing projects (paragraphs and the full essay)
- Videos to watch

Students should expect to spend 5-6 hours a week on coursework.

Most assignments are due on Sundays at 11:59 p.m. to provide flexibility during the preceding week. A few paragraph assignments requiring revisions are due on Wednesdays at 11:59 p.m. Students will know in advance if they will need to submit an assignment on a Wednesday.

Assignments must be submitted as Word documents or PDFs. (Pages or Open Office documents may be converted to either file type.)

Course Outline

First Semester (August 2023)

Students will learn how to do the following:

- Brainstorm and outline
- Narrate with creativity
- Incorporate research
- Analyze a text
- Develop a thesis
- Persuade an audience
- Take an essay through the writing process

Writing the Sentence—1 week

Purpose: Focus on the sentence as the building block for paragraphs. Study word choice, fluency, and voice in depth while reading well-crafted sentences.

Paragraph Structure—9 weeks

Purpose: Focus on writing paragraphs according to the three modes—narrative, informational/explanatory, persuasive—with an emphasis on the six traits of writing on a detailed level. Students will have opportunities to workshop, revise, and edit their work.

Week 1: Narrative Writing

Weeks 2-3: Investigative Journalism

Weeks 4-5: Explanatory/Informative Writing with Research

Week 6: Analysis

Week 7: Compare and Contrast Writing as Analysis

Week 8: Review

Week 9: Persuasive Writing

Essay Structure (Persuasive Essay)—6 weeks

Purpose: Focus on writing a basic essay with support through each step of the writing process.

Week 1: Prewriting and thesis development

Week 2: Outlining

Week 3: Supporting paragraphs

Week 4: Opening and closing paragraphs (and implement instructor feedback on supporting paragraphs)

Week 5: Peer Reviews and Instructor Feedback

Week 6: Editing, revising, and finishing

Second Semester (January 2024)

Students will do the following:

- Sharpen ideas through prewriting activities
- Find and evaluate sources
- Develop and refine theses for different purposes in writing
- Create logical flow within an essay
- Analyze and synthesize research
- Use research to support an argument
- Refine voice, word choice, and sentence fluency

Personal Narrative Essay—4 weeks

Week 1: Prewriting and thesis development

Week 2: First Draft

Week 3: Peer Reviews and Instructor Feedback

Week 4: Editing, revising, and finishing

Informational/Explanatory Essay Synthesizing Sources—6 weeks

Week 1: Prewriting and gathering sources

Week 2: Notetaking and Works Cited

Week 3: Outlining

Week 4: Supporting paragraphs with citations

Week 5: First draft

Week 6: Final draft

Argument—6 weeks

Week 1: Prewriting and thesis development

Week 2: Research and outlining

Week 3: Supporting paragraphs

Week 4: First draft

Week 5: Peer Reviews and Instructor Feedback

Week 6: Editing, revising, and finishing

Grading

Shorter assignments (such as parts of a larger writing project) will be graded within 7 days from the due date. Longer assignments (such as essay final drafts) will be graded within 14 days from the due date.

Grading Weights

- Writing Assignments (including essays)—45% of total grade

- Class Participation—15% of total grade
- Discussion Boards—25% of total grade
- Grammar and Editing Assignments—15% of total grade

Communication

I encourage and welcome questions, and you may email me at any time. Please use your Canvas Inbox to do so. I do my best to respond to emails quickly, and I guarantee a response within 24-48 hours (excluding on weekends).

Late Work

Because the assignments in this course build on one another, submitting work on-time is essential to success. Late work receives a 10% grade deduction for each day that an assignment is late. (After 10 days, a missing assignment can no longer be submitted for credit.) Students are allowed one late submission for full credit per semester.

Although I cannot guarantee an extension for all circumstances, in cases such as illness or vacations, I am happy to provide an extension. Please email me to request one.

Live Class

Live class meetings will take place on Mondays from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. ET. Attendance is part of students' class participation grades, and students are strongly encouraged to attend as many live meetings as possible. Students may earn full participation credit, however, by viewing the recording within a week of its posting and emailing me a brief summary or notes from the class.

Students must turn on their webcams for at least the beginning of class to confirm their identities. I encourage them to keep their webcams on for the duration of our meetings, because research has shown that this encourages stronger class participation and mastery.

Technology Requirements

- High speed, broadband Internet
- Web cam, sound card, and microphone (for live sessions)
- Streaming video capabilities to watch recorded lectures

Plagiarism

As stated in the Student Handbook, I “will contact the parent in the first instance [of suspected plagiarism] to solicit the parent’s involvement and preferences for handling the situation. All incidents of this nature must be reported to the Aim Academy administration and documented.

Ongoing failure to comply with Aim Academy’s plagiarism policy will result in disciplinary action that may include any of the following:

- A conference with student, parent, and teacher.

- Requiring the student to redo the assignment.
- A failing grade for the assignment.
- Other consequences determined by the teacher, including dismissal from the course.

Disciplinary action will depend on the severity of the plagiarism. In administering any disciplinary actions, our posture will be gracious and restorative—even while upholding a high standard for academic integrity.”

Student Behavior

Students are expected to behave respectfully to their classmates and instructor at all times. Remember, in an online setting, other people cannot always see your face or hear your tone of voice. Because of this, it is particularly important to choose clear, kind words when commenting in discussion boards and offering constructive feedback in peer reviews.

Technical Difficulties

The Canvas Helpdesk is an excellent resource for students who may encounter technical difficulties in Canvas. <https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Student-Guide/How-do-I-get-help-with-Canvas-as-a-student/ta-p/498>

If you encounter issues in Zoom, such as blurry or frozen videos, moving closer to a Wi-Fi router or using an ethernet connection may be helpful. In the case of major technical difficulties, such as a power outage, students are always welcome to catch up with the Zoom recording. Please see information on [Live Class](#) above.