

Writing the Introduction Essay for Writing Proficiency Courses in English 3000 and English 3001

All students who submit a portfolio for English 3000 and English 3001 are required to write a Reflective Introductory essay (with a Turnitin report). As a general guideline, this essay should be between 2-3 pages in length. The essay provides portfolio readers with insight as to who you are and what you have accomplished as a writer during the ten weeks of your English 3000 or English 3001 Writing Proficiency course. Here are some general guidelines that you should follow when you write the essay:

- You will be using an argument and persuasion strategy to write your reflective essay. Your whole purpose in doing so is to convince readers that you have improved your overall writing skills, and you are now competent or proficient enough to move on to the next level or to meet university standard writing requirements completely.
- The essay must be thesis driven: that is, you have to present a clear and compelling position statement. Remember that the thesis consists of a central argument or main idea. It is a strong statement of opinion, one that can be supported with persuasive forms of evidence. After all, the whole idea here is to persuade others that you have improved enough as a writer to warrant a passing grade for the course.
- Start with some major points to develop the essay. Your text should reference specific assignments, including in class writings as well as out of class essays. Mention how you made progress over the quarter in these writings and why your portfolio clearly indicates writing proficiency.
- Since the out of class essays consist of three drafts, you may want to explain how you improved each of the drafts over time. Discuss some of the more significant changes that you made such as developing a thesis, strengthening paragraph content, and/or learning how to support claims with strong supporting evidence such as facts, illustrations, examples, testimony, or observations.
- You may also bring in some secondary points of argument, once you have established your strongest points of argument for passing this course. You may want to mention how you have improved your technical skills as a writer. Perhaps you have learned to overcome problems with sentence errors (fragments, run-ons, and comma splices), or maybe you want to tell your readers about how you have achieved better results in the area of technical skills (grammar, syntax, verb constructions, use of verb tenses, correct word form, etc.).
- While it is important to acknowledge the progress that you have made over the quarter, you should also mention that self-improvement is an ongoing process. Acknowledge the need for continued work in developing strong content for your essays or term papers, as well as in improving your skills as an editor.
- Check your work carefully before you put it into the portfolio. Keep content errors to a minimum. Prove to the portfolio readers that you have become a better editor. Readers are looking for evidence that you have made some progress in this area and that you can be self-correcting.
- Don't forget to provide the turnitin.com report!

Things to Avoid

- Avoid negative commentary. Don't be so self-critical that you end up having little in the way of positive things to offer to the readers about yourself. Instead, emphasize the progress that you made over the course of the quarter.
- Don't spend too much time discussing unimportant matters. While you may have become a better speller or achieved a measure of expertise with things like using prepositions and articles, these are not the things that are likely to impress readers, nor are they (exclusively) the kinds of skills that you need to write a university level essay.
- Avoid writing an essay that is simply too brief or understated to impress your audience. A one page essay, for example, is not enough, nor is it necessarily a strongly persuasive argument that is representative of the kind of work that you should be doing by the end of the quarter. Don't underestimate the importance of this self-reflective statement. After all, it is the first thing that readers look at when they are evaluating the portfolio.

Remember: The introduction essay is a gateway of sorts. It represents your first opportunity to get the attention of the readers and to show them what you have accomplished over a ten week period. Put forth your best effort here in the introduction. A good start generally leads to a positive outcome in the overall evaluation process of your English 3000/3001 portfolio.