

WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF FIRST-YEAR WRITING COURSES (ENGLISH 101 AND 102) AT KU?

To teach writing knowledge and strategies that will transfer to other disciplinary contexts:

First-year writing courses serve as the foundation for writing practice that will continue as students progress through their studies. Within the field of Writing Studies, researchers have explored “writing knowledge transfer”—that is, how writing knowledge and abilities learned in one context are applied within new writing contexts.

English 101 and 102 courses implement key strategies for facilitating transfer: teaching writing processes and revision strategies; teaching multiple methods of research; and fostering rhetorical awareness of how to shape writing for different purposes and audiences and across varied genres, modes, and media.

To foster engagement and belonging (which supports student persistence and retention):

Because of the small class size in English 101 and 102, students can count on regular opportunities to meet one-on-one with their instructor as well as to engage in reflection and discussions with their peers, which fosters a sense of community and belonging (key factors in persistence and retention).

Longitudinal studies examining students’ college writing experiences—based on reflective activities and engagement in active learning—have identified first-year writing courses as formative moments for students’ life-long learning and writing experiences [“First Year Writing: What Good Does it Do?” A Policy Brief produced by the National Council of Teachers of English].

HOW DOES ENGLISH 101 PREPARE STUDENTS FOR WRITING ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES?

By Teaching Transferable Skills of Rhetorical Flexibility and Writing Processes:

Our 101 course aims to teach students how to shape an effective response based on audience and purpose; how to critically analyze messages they encounter daily (via social media, ads, videos, podcasts, websites, photos, infographics); and how to ethically and persuasively position themselves in public conversations.

By assigning writing projects in 101 that ask students to shape their writing in response to multiple situations—for varying audiences and purposes—students gain “rhetorical flexibility” and skills for analyzing varied writing situations; as a result, when they step into other classes, they are better able to transfer or adapt these strategies to different writing situations and expectations by asking, “Who am I writing for? For what purpose? In what context?”

Students also have regular opportunities for feedback from writing instructors and peers as they practice strategies for drafting, revising, and editing their work—strategies they carry with them to other courses.

By Facilitating Metacognitive Awareness That Leads to Transfer:

Students’ reflection on their writing—and articulation of the strengths and weaknesses of their writing—is a regular component of 101. The course requires students to articulate audiences and purposes for writing and provides students with opportunities to reflect on their language choices for accomplishing their purposes, which prepares students well for the rhetorical and conceptual demands of future college and career writing.

HOW DOES ENGLISH 102 PREPARE STUDENTS FOR RESEARCH AND WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES?

By Teaching Inquiry Processes and Research Methods Applicable to Multiple Disciplines:

The 102 course focuses on inquiry and research, and one of the course goals is to teach students to “engage in a variety of research methods”—from field research or ethnographic inquiry (observation, interviews, surveys), to archival and library research—and to integrate varied sources in their writing.

With the focus on inquiry, students learn to create thoughtful research questions and explore these questions through research. Students also critically evaluate the credibility of their sources and learn about the ethics of primary research, including how to obtain consent and how their positionality affects their inquiry.

Students are also taught general skills of analysis, synthesis, and critical reading that they can carry with them and utilize in other disciplinary contexts.

By Assigning Research/Writing in Students’ Own Disciplines:

Many 102 teachers frame assignments that ask student to conduct inquiry into an issue in their field of interest or to conduct research on a topic/debate in their discipline. Students also explore how research methods and citation styles vary across disciplines.

In other words, students learn and reflect on research and writing strategies that can help build a bridge to their own disciplines’ discourse conventions and research processes.

ENGLISH 101 GOALS

By the end of English 101, students should be able to:

- 1) Analyze how language and rhetorical choices vary across texts and different institutional, historical, cultural, and/or public contexts**
 - Analyze multiple texts and contexts for their differences in purpose, audience, subject, genre, and medium (print, oral, digital, multimedia)
 - Analyze the language and rhetorical choices of texts and contexts and how they reflect differences in purpose, audience, subject, genre, and medium
 - Critically evaluate how language and rhetorical choices reflect and represent multiple contexts, rhetorical purposes, audiences, subjects, genres, and media
- 2) Demonstrate their rhetorical flexibility within both academic and nonacademic (or public) writing contexts**
 - Produce rhetorically effective responses to varying writing tasks (including differences of purpose, audience, subject, genre, and medium) by varying content, structure, language, and conventions in ways appropriate to the rhetorical and social context
 - Use a variety of voices, tones, styles, and levels of formality
 - Recognize and experiment with the rhetorical effects of language choices
 - Recognize how standards for syntax, grammar, punctuation, and spelling vary across rhetorical contexts and demonstrate an ability to fulfill standards appropriate for those contexts
- 3) Revise to improve their own writing and develop flexible strategies for drafting, reviewing, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing**
 - Adapt composing processes to different contexts and situations and for a variety of media (e.g., print, oral, digital, multimedia)
 - Develop their ideas through interaction with other writers and readers and use composing processes and strategies as a means to discover and reconsider ideas
 - Develop a writing project through multiple drafts
 - Give and receive critical responses to writing, and use suggestions appropriately to improve their own writing
 - Critique their own writing and revise to improve global qualities (focus, development, organization) as well as local qualities (style, usage)

SEQUENCE OF ENGLISH 101 ASSIGNMENTS

Writing Project 1: Literacy Narrative/Autobiography:

Students examine the effects of multiple contextual, institutional, and cultural influences on their writing practices or on a community's language practices.

Writing Project 2: Rhetorical Analysis of a Community-Based Text:

Students gain foundational skills in rhetorical analysis and rhetorical reading of a text and expand their repertoires for understanding how written, visual, or multimodal texts work to influence audiences and reinforce messages.

Writing Project 3: Multi-Genre Public Awareness Campaign:

Students choose two different genres to address a rhetorical problem they have identified, thus practicing and demonstrating rhetorical flexibility and writing for different purposes, audiences, genres, modes, and mediums. Students also gain practice writing for a public audience.

Writing Project 4: Revision Project:

Students revise or remediate a previous project in order to improve writing and strengthen rhetorical strategies.

ENGLISH 102 GOALS

By the end of English 102, students should be able to:

- 1) Build on and extend the abilities gained in English 101**
 - Analyze how language and rhetorical choices vary across texts and different institutional, historical, cultural, and/or public contexts
 - Demonstrate their rhetorical flexibility within and both academic and nonacademic writing
 - Revise to improve their own writing and develop flexible strategies for drafting, reviewing, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing
- 2) Use writing and reading for inquiry, thinking, learning, and communicating**
 - Work with demanding readings and learn to interpret and evaluate these readings
 - Use writing as a problem-solving process that fosters the discovery, analysis, and synthesis of new ideas
 - Analyze and synthesize multiple points of view so as to understand that multiple perspectives on an idea are in operation at the same time
- 3) Write in ways appropriate to multiple rhetorical contexts (academic or disciplinary, professional, public)**
 - Recognize and critically evaluate how a writer's choices (content, organization, format, rhetorical moves, style, grammar, etc.) reflect and represent multiple cultural and/or historical perspectives
 - Engage in collaborative work at a variety of levels (research, inventions, writing, presentations, etc.) to prepare students for team/group situations, communication in the workplace, and lifelong learning
- 4) Engage in a variety of research methods to study and explore topics**
 - Propose, plan and complete research projects using methods appropriate to the writing task
 - Effectively integrate a variety of appropriate sources into their writings
 - Learn and use at least one system of documentation responsibly

SEQUENCE OF ENGLISH 102 ASSIGNMENTS

Writing Project 1: Inquiry into a cultural object/artifact

Students focus on the meaning of objects or artifacts and what they can tell us about the values and culture of the people who own or use them. Students practice using popular sources to support their claims.

Writing Project 2: Autoethnographic Inquiry into a Community

Students investigate a community or culture they belong to and explore how the culture's actions, interactions, and ways of communicating reflect something about that culture's beliefs and values. Students practice field research or qualitative methods (observations, interviews).

Writing Project 3: Synthesizing and Joining a Conversation in a Discipline

Students draw on library research and academic sources as they explore an issue in their disciplinary community and work to join the disciplinary conversation.

Writing Project 4: Group Presentation on a Multidisciplinary Conversation

Students corroboratively explore a topic (such as AI) through the lens of multiple disciplinary cultures and do a group poster presentation.