WRITING SKILLS I
Course Packet

Required Textbook:

Online Component: [www.mywritinglab.com](http://www.mywritinglab.com) (access comes with textbook when using ISBN above or purchasing in the college bookstore)

Course Overview: Writing Skills I focuses on introducing college writing through the one-paragraph essay, which begins with a general topic sentence/main idea followed by specific supporting evidence. Students should gain knowledge and skills in the following areas:

- Grammar and sentence skills – including fragments, run-ons, verbs, punctuation
- Paragraph essay format – including main idea and supporting details
- The writing process – pre-writing, organizing, drafting, revising
- Controlling the writing process – addressing fears about writing

Writing Assignments: The syllabus includes eight writing assignments, two of which should be timed, in-class writings. At this level, your assessment of the students’ needs should be primary. A revision can be considered a separate writing assignment if the class would benefit from fewer new topics. Each assignment, except for the timed writings, should be approached in stages (prewriting activities, drafting, organizing, revising, and proofreading). An effective one-paragraph essay will have a general main idea as the first sentence (or soon thereafter if the student uses an introductory sentence), followed by two or three specific supporting reasons or examples. One temptation for students at this level is to construct an essay that is simply a listing of things; they should be helped, instead, to choose two or three of the items they might put on their list and provide more detail about each one.

The textbook includes a section on writing essays (Chapter 5). Since your students will write paragraphs, this section is for those exemplary students who are earning As on all papers and qualify to prepare a Writing Skills 2 Exemption Portfolio. Please discuss this with your portfolio partner at mid-term.

The suggested course outline does NOT include readings about rhetorical strategies, as students at this level are not required to be able to recognize and write according to those patterns. Of course, you can choose to have students learn about them if you think it will help your particular class write on any of the given topics more effectively.

The department has a list of essay topics suitable for use in Writing Skills I, which is included in this packet and is also available on the department weebly. They are divided into topics that work better as revised essays and topics that are effective as timed essays, and do not have specific rhetorical strategies. Please use these topics rather than trying to
come up with other ones; these were created with the unique needs of Writing 1 students in mind. If you have questions, though, feel free to check in with your portfolio partner.

**Assessment:** Writing I students are assessed by midterm and final portfolios, which compile their work and require that the students reflect on their writing progress. Students must have a passing final portfolio to pass the class and move on to Writing Skills II. Therefore, any student who does not have a passing class average (due to missed assignments, absences, etc.), should NOT be permitted to submit a final portfolio. The midterm portfolio includes one revised essay, a printout of their MyWritingLab work, and a reflection sheet. The final portfolio includes one revised essay, one in-class timed essay, a printout of their MyWritingLab work, and a reflection sheet. Please duplicate and distribute feedback and reflection sheets to students when they are preparing their midterm and final portfolios. A final grammar test is also given at the end of the semester. The department will provide a paper test upon request, but there is an electronic test available on MWL (called the Mastery Check) that most teachers prefer to use. Students are required to take one of these tests and the score can be used in conjunction with their final portfolio to determine their readiness for Writing Skills II.

The course outline allows a week for both midterm and final portfolios. You are likely to need a significant part of the week – if not every class of those weeks – to help students put their portfolios together.

**Grading:** When grading essays, please conform to letter grades (A, B, C, F, R/Revise) for all revised essays and use the holistic scoring scale (1 – 6) for in-class timed essays.

If an exceptional student is consistently receiving high Bs or As on his/her essays, you may wish to have the student complete a Writing Skills II portfolio which can be reviewed by you and your portfolio partner. The student may have the potential to exempt Writing Skills II. Please identify exemption students at mid-term or slightly thereafter.

**Journals:** At this level of literacy, a journal can be a good tool for developing fluency and ease. Students need as much writing practice as possible, and may not write unless assigned. Journals need not be corrected. You can let students explore writing and give them credit simply for doing it; you can give them supportive feedback on the content without marking them.

**Grammar Topics:** This outline covers some of the most common problems of students at this level. However, you may find that your students need to spend more time on some of these topics, or that they need work on others that are not here. Students do not need to be grammar experts upon completion of Writing I, but they do need to be able to write coherent sentences. Critical to this coherence are: verbs (subject-verb agreement, forms of regular and irregular verbs, tense consistency), fragments, run-ons, spelling, homonyms/commonly confused words, plurals, missing letters/words, use of apostrophes. The required and suggested MyWritingLab topics that correlate with each grammar chapter are indicated on the student course outline. You may wish to use these activities as homework assignments to reinforce lessons you have gone over in class, or you may
choose to use some class time to review the activities with your students. Students are required to include a printout of the topics they have mastered on MWL in their miderm and final portfolios, and their progress will be considered when evaluating whether the portfolio is passing. However you choose to use the program, know that you will have to spend some time reviewing MWL progress with your students.

**Support:** Students at this level need one-on-one work. Some classes can be turned into writing workshops while you conference with individual students or while they work on specific peer review tasks. **Also, please encourage students to make use of the Reading and Writing Learning Labs located on the Blackwood and Camden campuses (LRC 011 in Blackwood and CAM 323 in Camden).** These computer labs offer open access computer time as well as tutoring services for students taking Reading and/or Writing courses at CCC. They are staffed with department faculty who can assist and support your students. There are Learning Lab referral cards available from the department if you would like to give them to students, although they are not necessary. You may want to include the lab schedules on your first day handout.

### Suggested Course Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Textbook</th>
<th>MWL Module</th>
<th>Writing Assignment</th>
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</table>
| **1** | Introduction to the Course: Part One of the writing process-Exploring (Ch. 1) | Pages 4-11 | W5.1  
W5.2  
W5.3 | In-class Diagnostic Essay (Provided in First-Day Packet). You can also have students begin the Path Builder on MyWritingLab.com either this week or next. It will establish their individualized study plan for the semester. |
| **2** | Continue the writing process: Developing (Ch. 2)  
Grammar: Nouns (Ch.6); Identifying subjects and verbs (Ch. 8)  
Pages 12-30  
Pages 110 – 125  
and 145-156; includes Review Tests | Pages 12-30  
Reviews Tests | W5.4  
W5.5  
W5.6  
W5.7  
W5.8  
W1.2 | Writing Assignment #1  
(Suggestion- Revise diagnostic essay) |
| **3** | Revising and Editing (Ch. 3); Editing Symbol List  
Grammar: Fragments  
Pages 31-43 and Back Cover OR your own list  
Pages 267-275, incl. Review Test | Pages 31-43 and Back Cover OR your own list  
Pages 267-275, incl. Review Test | W2.1  
W2.2  
W6.3 | Writing Assignment #2  
– or –  
Revise Writing Assignment #1 |
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<tr>
<th>Week</th>
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<th>Textbook</th>
<th>MWL Module</th>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Revisit transitions and more with topic sentences</td>
<td>Pages 15 – 20 and 22 - 27</td>
<td>W2.3 W2.11 W6.1</td>
<td>Start or Revise Writing Assignment #2</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grammar: Run-ons</td>
<td>Pages 276-281; incl. Review Test</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Addressing a Timed Essay (esp. fears about writing)</td>
<td>Pages 157-174 and 175 - 191; incl. Review Tests</td>
<td>W1.6 W1.7 W6.4</td>
<td>Writing Assignment #3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Grammar: Past and Present Verb Tense; Past Participles</td>
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<td>Timed In-Class Writing</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Grammar: Subject-Verb Agreement</td>
<td>Pages 217-230; incl. Review Test</td>
<td>W2.4 W6.4</td>
<td>Writing Assignment #4</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Editing (Practice w/ skills)</td>
<td>There are editing practice tests on pages 382-387 in the text.</td>
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<td>Revise Writing Assignment #4</td>
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<td>MIDTERM PORTFOLIO</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Grammar: Verb Tense &amp; Consistency; Capitalization</td>
<td>Pages 231-237 and 376 - 381; incl. Review Tests</td>
<td>W2.5 W3.7 W6.5</td>
<td>Writing Assignment #5</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Grammar: Spelling; Commonly Confused Words</td>
<td>Pages 326-337 and 338-347; incl. Review Tests</td>
<td>W3.8 W4.2</td>
<td>Revise Writing Assignment #5</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Grammar: Possessives and other uses of Apostrophes</td>
<td>Pages 361-370; incl. Review Tests</td>
<td>W3.5 W6.8</td>
<td>Writing Assignment #6</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Grammar: Pronouns (Meaning, Reference, &amp; Agreement)</td>
<td>Pages 126-144; incl. Review Test</td>
<td>W1.4 W2.8</td>
<td>Revise Writing Assignment #6</td>
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<td>Week</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td><strong>Grammar: Commas</strong></td>
<td>Pages 348-360; incl. Review Test</td>
<td>W3.1 W3.4 W6.6</td>
<td>Writing Assignment #7</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Grammar Review</td>
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<td>Writing Assignment #8-Timed In-Class Writing</td>
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<td>FINAL PORTFOLIO DUE</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>End of course: Grammar Tests and Conferences</td>
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<td>FINAL GRAMMAR TEST; MWL MASTERY CHECK</td>
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<td>W1.2 – Subjects and Verbs</td>
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<td>W1.4 – Pronouns</td>
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<td>W1.6 – Verbs</td>
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<td>W2 – Sentence Skills</td>
<td>W2.1 – Sentence Structure</td>
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<td>W2.2 – Fragments</td>
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<td>W2.4 – Subject-Verb Agreement</td>
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<td>W2.5 – Consistent Verb Tense &amp; Active Voice</td>
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<td>W2.8 – Pronoun-Antecedent Agreement</td>
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<td>W2.11 – Combining Sentences</td>
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<td>W3 – Punctuation, Mechanics &amp; Spelling</td>
<td>W3.1 – Commas</td>
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<td>W3.4 – Semicolons, Colons, Dashes, Parentheses</td>
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<td>W3.5 – Apostrophes</td>
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<td>W4 – Usage &amp; Style</td>
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<td>W5 – The Craft of Writing</td>
<td>W5.1 – Getting Started</td>
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<td>W5.2 – The Writing Process</td>
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<td>W5.5 – The Topic Sentence</td>
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<td>W5.6 – Developing &amp; Organizing a Paragraph</td>
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<td>W5.7 – Revising the Paragraph</td>
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<td>W5.8 – Editing the Paragraph</td>
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<td>W6 – Paragraph Development</td>
<td>W6.1 – Paragraphs: Describing</td>
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<td>W6.2 – Paragraphs: Narrating</td>
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<td>W6.3 – Paragraphs: Illustrating</td>
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<td>W6.4 – Paragraphs: Process</td>
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<td>W6.5 – Paragraphs: Compare &amp; Contrast</td>
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<td>W6.6 – Paragraphs: Division and Classification</td>
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<td>W6.7 – Paragraphs: Definition</td>
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<td>W6.8 – Paragraphs: Cause and Effect</td>
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<td>W6.9 – Paragraphs: Argument</td>
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SUGGESTED TOPICS

At the Writing 1 level in particular, it is most effective to present the topic, whether timed or revised, in a way that reminds / directs students that the paragraph may be written with three clear major supporting details. That is, it is more helpful to present, “Write an essay in which you explain three reasons why you should pass Writing Skills I” than to present “Write about why you should pass Writing Skills I.”

TIMED ESSAY PROMPTS

In general, timed essays should not require as much prewriting or guided class activity as revised essays may require. Students should be offered topics that allow them to work through the writing process independently, and prompts that work best offer a structure within them. Many teachers assign a timed essay just before the midterm or final portfolio; the first three prompts below ask students to think about their writing in a similar way as the portfolio reflection sheets do and can help students generate ideas for their portfolios.

- Write an essay in which you explain three reasons why you should pass Writing Skills I. (NOTE: this is best used as a FINAL timed essay at the end of the semester, possibly for inclusion in final portfolio.)

- Write an essay in which you describe the steps or stages in your writing process. (NOTE: this can be successfully used as a MIDTERM or FINAL timed essay and can be helpful for students as they work on their reflection sheets.)

- Write an essay in which you describe three ways your writing has improved since the beginning of the semester. (NOTE: this is best used as a FINAL timed essay at the end of the semester, and can be helpful for students as they work on their final reflection sheets.)

- Write an essay explaining three reasons why you are in college.

- Write an essay explaining three things you would do if you won a million dollars and could not spend it all on yourself.

- Write an essay that describes a person who has made a difference in your life and three reasons why this person is so important.
REVISED ESSAY PROMPTS

The prompts below can be developed into assignments that encourage students to work through the stages of the writing process. Class brainstorming activities and/or guided prewriting can help students develop the ideas for these assignments. Some students may respond better to assignments that ask them to draw upon their own experiences and knowledge, and teachers should be mindful of their students' context when assigning topics. At this level it is helpful to offer choices for students as they write, while at the same time offering guidance for those choices.

- Write an essay describing three meaningful or valuable possessions you have and why each one matters to you.
- Write an essay that explains one of the following:
  - Three types of love
  - Three types of music
  - Three types of movies or television shows
- Write an essay about a place you would like visit or live and the reasons why you would choose that location.
- Write an essay describing three qualities of effective students OR effective teachers. (NOTE: for first time college students, especially those with educational challenges, this particular topic may require group brainstorming as our students may not know how to verbalize these qualities.)
- Write about a mistake you made in your life. If you could go back in time, what would you do differently, and how do you think that would change the outcome? (NOTE: Three parts of this prompt should lead to three major details for the essay.)
- Write about the process that can be used to do one of the following: (NOTE: students should be encouraged to view the process they are writing about in three main steps or stages rather than a list of simple steps.)
  - Discipline a young child
  - Make friends
  - Find a job
- Write an essay about the differences between one of the following pairs:
  - Two schools
  - Two friends
  - Two co-workers
  - Two bosses
  - Two neighborhoods / towns / cities
  - Two singers or performers
  - Two teachers (please use initials, not full names)
Writing Skills I
PORTFOLIO INSTRUCTIONS

All essays should be typed, except for timed, in-class essays. For the midterm portfolio, the revised essay does not need to be a clean copy (i.e. rewritten), although an earlier draft should be included. For the final portfolio, students should rewrite their chosen revised essay.

MIDTERM PORTFOLIO

1. Revised Essay – Include early draft and final draft
2. MyWritingLab Printout – Students can print a list of the grammar topics they have mastered in each module by clicking on ‘Extra Practice’ and opening each grammar module (1-4)
3. Reflection Sheet – This should be completed in class although students may be told about the questions in advance so they can think about them as they choose their essay
4. Assessment Sheet – Instructor will complete, review with partner

FINAL PORTFOLIO

1. Revised Essay – This should be a rewritten, clean copy of a revised essay. Students should include draft(s).
2. Timed Essay – This should not be rewritten; must be a handwritten essay completed in class.
3. MyWritingLab Printout – Students can print a list of the grammar topics they have mastered in each module by clicking on ‘Extra Practice’ and opening each grammar module (1-4)
4. Reflection Sheet – As with midterm sheet, students should complete this in class although they may be advised ahead of time as to what they will be expected to complete.
5. Final Grammar Test – This should be done in class. You may choose whether your students take the paper test provided by the department or the online test available on MyWritingLab (called the Mastery Check). 50 minutes is the maximum time allowed for the paper test, although it is not likely to take that long. It is likely that the Grammar Test will be done in class after students have submitted their Final Portfolio, but that you will have the score when you review portfolios with your partner.
MIDTERM PORTFOLIO
FEEDBACK/ASSESSMENT SHEET

Student’s Name ________________________________________________________
Instructor: ___________________________  Section: _______________________

Reflection Sheet:

_____ Adequately addresses learning
_____ Free of sentence level errors
_____ Other

Essay:

Organization

______ Clear thesis statement
_______ Makes two or three clearly different points
_______ Keeps points in order

Grammar/Usage Problems

_____ Fragments  _____ Punctuation  _____ Word Choice
_____ Run-ons  _____ Capitalization  _____ Other
_____ S/V Agreement  _____ Pronouns
_____ Verb Issues  _____ Homonyms
_____ Unclear Meaning  _____ Spelling
_____ Plurals  _____ Missing words

Content/Details

_______ Specific support for points
_______ Relevant details
_______ Sufficient support for thesis

MyWriting Lab:  # of topics mastered: ________ (as indicated on MWL printout)

Portfolio Assessment:  _____ Pass  _____ Shows Progress  _____ Not Passing

Comments:
Writing Skills I
Midterm Portfolio
REFLECTION SHEET

Answer the following questions and hand in this sheet with the essay you have chosen and your MyWritingLab printout. This sheet will be considered as part of your midterm portfolio. You may answer these questions on another piece of paper if you need more room to write.

Name: ______________________________________________________

Title of the essay you chose for your portfolio:
____________________________________________________________

What does this essay demonstrate that you have learned about writing?

What are you proud of about this essay?

What do you feel you still need to learn about writing effectively?

Describe what you have learned so far using MyWritingLab. How has it helped your writing?
FINAL PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT SHEET
WRITING SKILLS 1

Student’s Name ____________________________________________

Instructor: ____________________________________________ Section: __________________

Reflection Sheet:
STRENGTHS: ____________________________________________ WEAKNESSES: ____________________________________________

- Adequately addresses learning
- Free of sentence level errors
- Other

Organizational Strengths (checked if present)
Revised Essay:
- Clear thesis statement
- Makes two or three different points
- Keeps points in order

Timed Essay:
- Clear Thesis Statement
- Makes two or three different points
- Keeps points in order

Grammar/Usage Problems (checked if present)
Revised Essay:
- Fragments
- Run-ons
- S/V Agree
- Verb Issues
- Spelling
- Unclear Meaning
- Missing words
- Other

Timed Essay:
- Fragments
- Run-ons
- S/V Agree
- Verb Issues
- Spelling
- Unclear Meaning
- Missing words
- Other:

Content/Details (checked if present)
Revised Essay:
- Specific support for points
- Relevant details
- Sufficient support for thesis
- Vague or repetitive support

Timed Essay:
- Specific support for points
- Relevant details
- Sufficient support for thesis
- Vague or repetitive support

MyWriting Lab: # of topics mastered: ________ (as indicated on MWL printout)

Portfolio Assessment: _______ Pass _______ Making Progress _______ Fail
Comments:

12
Writing Skills I
Final Portfolio
REFLECTION SHEET

Answer the following questions and hand in this sheet with the essays you have chosen and your MyWritingLab printout. This sheet will be considered as part of your final portfolio, so you should think about it and proofread it carefully. You may answer these questions on another piece of paper if you need more room to write.

Name: __________________________________________

Title of the revised essay you chose for your portfolio:
____________________________________________________________

What does this revised essay demonstrate that you have learned about writing?

What are you proud of about how you wrote this essay?

Timed Essay

What would you have changed about this timed essay if you had been able to revise it?

Describe your experience using MyWritingLab. How has it affected your grammar skills?