Writing Spaces Author Guide

Last updated: Fall 2010

Please read through all of this guide before beginning drafting of your full Writing Space (WS) manuscript. Please follow these instructions carefully when writing and preparing your manuscript for initial review by our editorial board and in final preparation for copy editing.

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Peer Review, Copy Editing and Production Process

Your editors will provide some feedback suggestions with your proposal approval for you to use in preparing a full version of your manuscript.

Once you complete the full version of your manuscript, your essay will be reviewed by two members of the WS editorial board. The reviewers will collaborate on your review and provide you with feedback. Editorial board members never reject a manuscript during a first review; rather, they will, if they find the manuscript needs significant work, remand it back to you with feedback for revision and ask you to resubmit it.

Once a first review has been completed, you will be put in contact with reviewers so that you may ask any questions about required or suggested revisions. You are strongly encouraged to ask questions of them. WS believes in a highly collaborative review and production process so that authors can produce great essays for students to use.

Once a manuscript is accepted for publication, editors may ask for you to complete a few, minor, additional revisions in preparation for copy editing. Two WS editors will work together during copy editing on your manuscript and provide a copy to you for approval.

After the copy editing phase and your chapter has been inserted into the book template in InDesign by our publisher, Parlor Press, you will receive a galley proof of your chapter. This will be the last opportunity for you to catch minor proofreading and formatting issues before the book is published. Digital versions of your chapter will be PDFs of the book formatted version.

Creative Commons Licenses

All WS chapters are published under Creative Commons Licenses and subject to the Writing Spaces Terms of Use.

WS recommends the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike license. Authors may choose to use instead the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works license. You will need to make your choice once your chapter passes editorial board review and editors begin copy editing. If you have questions about Creative Commons licenses or you’d like to choose a different Creative Commons license, please contact the editors: editors@writingspaces.org.

Writing for a Student Audience

As you know, the audience for WS is students in first year writing; the texts should not be written for teachers.
Consider this to be more difficult than you may initially surmise—or, should we say, it might be harder than you think. We have found that audience address is the most significant problem that authors have in writing their chapters. During the reviews by our editorial board of full manuscripts for the 1st and 2nd volumes, over half of the manuscripts were remanded back to authors for revision and resubmission for review where problems with audience address were a major concern of the reviewers. The difficulty seems to be that authors know they are being reviewed by fellow teachers and scholars, so that they unconsciously implement rhetorical strategies better suited for the reviewing audience itself.

**Strategies for Writing for a Student Audience**

Before drafting your manuscript, we recommend that you review a few of the chapters in the WS collection and observe the ways in which authors are best addressing student audiences.

As you write, think "essay," not "academic article"—an essay in *The New Yorker* or *The Best American Essays* series as opposed to a *CCC* journal article—and consider some of the following key questions and answers:

1. **Have you envisioned a helpful persona?** Instead of coming across as a scholar or researcher, adopt more of the role of a fellow writer (albeit a knowledgeable one), who is writing as more of a coach or a mentor of the student reader in order to help them to become a better writer.

2. **Have you adapted a tone and voice well-suited for a student audience?** A WS chapter can be (and probably should be) more informal in tone and style—even to the point of being colloquial—than your academic prose.

3. **Is the writing direct and clear enough for student readers?** Are you forecasting? Are you using headings to effectively organize your text? How about sentence variety (we tend to gravitate toward longer, very complex sentence constructions, like this one, in academic prose that can be a problem for first year student reading comprehension). However, beware of "dumbing down" the content of the piece too much; it may help to imagine yourself as more of a technical writer creating an instructional document that must communicate complex concepts to a less knowledgeable audience (although without adopting the often almost sterile voice of some technical writing).

4. **Might you able to come up with a way to frame your chapter that would elicit student engagement with the concepts within it?** You need to grab and hold your readers’ interest in ways that scholarly audiences will not usually need.

5. **Are you using student-situated examples and metaphors (and perhaps visuals) that will effectively communicate your ideas to students and also engage students with the concepts in the reading?** You may need to rethink using examples from texts that we like to read as teachers.

6. **Are you using the right genre conventions?** Provide references to theory/theorists (if needed) in context; avoid the academic article convention of the “lit review” section. Not
only would it be more difficult to sustain a student reader’s engagement through an entire lit review section, but students need less “defense” of the concepts you will use than would otherwise be necessary in academic prose; your chapter is an instructional document where they need good “explanations” to understand the concepts and advice on how to implement writing best practices. Student readers will accept the concepts once they understand them and find them useful. In this regard, student-centered examples and metaphors can often be a better method of conveying concepts than quotation and paraphrasing of theorists. After all, composition scholarship is written for a teacher audience.

7. **Are you actually addressing your audience?** When we talk about students in our writing to other teachers, we constantly talk about what “students” do or don’t do because of the focus of our pedagogy and scholarship. In your essay, beware of overtly talking about students in the third person. Talk directly to students. Use “you” to address them, much as you would during class. Use the imperative voice to be directive. In other instances, beware of where you might be referring to “students” when you should be talking about “writers.”

**Submitting Your Documents**

You should furnish your chapter by email attachment (use a Zip file to collect multiple files) to editors@writingspaces.org. No matter which program you use to prepare your document, you should submit your files in Word .doc, OpenOffice .odt, or “Rich Text Format” (.rtf), which preserves all the essential formatting. Use a clearly identifying name (e.g., author name-chapter title.doc). Be sure to include originals of any visuals used in the chapter.

Important! Be sure to include author(s) contract(s) with your full manuscript. Editorial board members will not review your manuscript until the contract has been received by the editorial staff.

**Manuscript Length**

Your manuscript can run from 3,500 to 6,000 words including primary text that you have written and any examples or sample student writing. WS editors feel that student readers will not sustain engagement with manuscripts over 6,000 words, and we strongly discourage it. If you feel there is significant need for exceeding the maximum length, please discuss it first with the editors prior to completion of drafting. We may have suggestions for how you might reduce the length of your chapter.

**Chapter Descriptions**

In a document separate from your chapter manuscript, provide a 150 to 200 word description of your chapter. The description will be used on the WS website on your individual chapter page in the essay database: http://writingspaces.org/essays.

Write your chapter description for a broad audience of teachers (not students). As the number of WS
essays grows on the website, these descriptions will be useful tools for teachers for selecting chapters for full reading during their evaluation for course adoption. Use this purpose as your guide in writing your description.

As a matter of practical advice, do not overload your chapter description with references to composition theories and theorists, although a brief mention of something or someone important is OK. Focus on explaining to potential users of the chapter how to teach it and what benefits their students will derive from using your chapter.

Format and Style of the Manuscript

Follow the formatting and style conventions listed below and use the MLA Handbook for conventions not covered in this guide. If you have style and formatting convention questions that are not answered by this guide or the MLA Handbook, consult the most recent edition of the Chicago Manual of Style. If you have unusual style and/or formatting questions that would not be covered in the MLA Handbook or the Chicago Manual of Style, contact the editors.

Title and Name

Include the title of your manuscript, followed by your name, centered, at the top of your document in bold.

Line Spacing and Paragraphing

Use double line spacing for everything: body text, quotations, examples, captions, etc.

DO NOT use tabs or spaces to indent your paragraphs. DO NOT skip lines between paragraphs. We will run a script during manuscript production that strips all extra spaces and tabs; consequently, your document may end up being paragraphed incorrectly.

To correctly paragraph your document, set “first line indent” in your word processor’s paragraph formatting option to 0.2 inches. This will automatically delineate a new paragraph when you enter a single line return.

Font Style and Size

Your text files should not contain bold face type or any other unusual font style unless you are up to something unusual. Do use italic font style when it is required. Do not use underlining either unless you’ve discussed doing so with your editor. Do not use ALL CAPS. We recommend using 12 pt. Times New Roman throughout your text.
Page Headers and Footer

It is not necessary to use page headers or footers for including page numbers or your last name; they will be stripped during copy editing in preparing your manuscript for InDesign.

Headings

It is likely that you will need to use sub-headings in your chapter to assist student readers with navigating the document. DO NOT use underlines or ALL CAPS in creating headings. As with the “Writing for a Student Audience” section at the beginning of this guide, format A-level headings centered, in bold:

Example A-Level Heading

B-Level headings should be flush left using bold and the same font size as the default for the document, as with the “Headings” heading for this section:

Example B-Level Heading

C-level headings should also be flush left with the same font size as the default for the document, only format with italics (not bold) as in the following example:

Example C-Level Heading

Works Cited and In-text Citation

Use a Works Cited page to document any sources referred to within the text. The Works Cited page should come at the very end of the chapter. Use the current version of the MLA Handbook for your in-text citations and Works Cited page.

Be certain to implement MLA citation and Works Cited formatting precisely. Student readers may look at your usage as examples for learning MLA documentation style.

Optional: If you would like, you may choose to include URLs for public Internet sources that are references in your Works Cited. Editors would prefer that you not include URLs linking to articles in password-protected bibliographic databases.

Endnotes

DO NOT embed any footnotes or endnotes in your chapter using your word processor footnote/endnote feature (they have to be stripped out, which can introduce error in copy editing your manuscript). Use endnotes (no footnotes), and place them manually by creating a “Notes” section at the end of your chapter before your Works Cited and after the discussion questions section (see below). The note numbers in the text should be in superscript, and subsequent notes should be
in numerical order. The “Notes” content at the end of your chapter should be formatted as a numbered list using your word processor’s numbered list feature.

**Discussion Questions**

Each WS chapter should feature a “Discussion” section immediately following the end of the main body of the chapter and before a Notes section or Works Cited. The Discussion section should include two (2) to five (5) discussion prompts that a teacher might assign to go along with your chapter.

**Quotes**

Longer pieces of cited material should be indented as block quotes, per MLA.

**Bullets and Numbered Lists**

Use your word processor’s built in list function for generating bullets and numbered lists with the default style it provides.

**Color**

*Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing* is printed in black and white so as to reduce the cost to students who might end up purchasing a print edition. The production manuscript is created in InDesign in greyscale in preparation for printing, and digital versions are created as PDFs of the print publication version. Therefore, you *cannot* use color text in your manuscript, and be aware that all images will be converted to greyscale.

**Hyperlinks**

You cannot include active hyperlinks in your text because they will not work in the print edition. If you need to, provide full URLs (e.g., http://example.com/) so that students can easily copy or type them into their web browser.

**Student Writing**

Please see at the end of this document, “Appendix B: Citing Student Writing and Requesting Student Permission,” for information on using student writing and sample permission forms.

**Visuals and Captions**

You may use images, tables, and other illustrations in your chapter as long as you have permission to do so. Important things to note:
1. Embed the visual in your chapter where you would like it to appear so that reviewers and editors will be able to easily evaluate its suitability for the chapter.

2. Tables may be embedded in the text, but they should be a maximum of 4.5 inches wide, with a font-size of 10 pt. or higher. For wider tables (in landscape format, for example), please include the table in a separate file. In either case, the caption for a table goes above the table. Each table should be labeled sequentially.

3. Provide a caption under the visual, and identify the captions as “Figure X” as per the instructions for captions in the MLA Handbook.

4. Put the credit line for images at the end of each caption, and be sure to arrange for permission in advance. You must also obtain any necessary permissions for any visuals you used. Fair use guidelines for educational use in the classroom do not apply the same with textbook publications. Unless you created the visuals yourself, you generally need to obtain permission to use them. Permissions must be submitted with your manuscript. Sample permission forms that you can use as provided Appendix A of this document.

5. Important! You must also provide original source files for all photographs, screenshots, and illustrations, and they must be of high quality. Editors can not use the images embedded in your word processing file when preparing the manuscript in InDesign. If you have figures, photographs, or other illustrations in electronic format, save each in a separate file. If you scan illustrations or photographs, you should do so at 600 dpi. Film stills should be captured at the highest level of resolution possible. Unless your editor has told you otherwise, all interior images should be in grayscale or black and white.

6. Name the files with the figure number and appropriate format extension (e.g., “Fig12.tif”). Don't manually change the file extension because the program that produced it has marked it in that format. Prepare each piece of art as a separate document.

Additional Formatting and Manuscript Preparation Instructions

1. Use one blank space following all periods, question marks, colons, exclamation marks, and semi-colons.

2. Italicize (do not underline) titles of books and journals.

3. Use only em dashes (e.g., “Now—and don't get me wrong—I believe . . . ”)

4. Treat “first year composition” and “first year writing” as compound nouns. Do not hyphenate “first year” in these instances.

5. Check to see that all sources cited in the text have entries in the Works Cited.

6. We aim for minimalist use of capitalization, as recommended by the Chicago Manual of Style. So, for example, all reference to committees, departments, programs, majors, etc. (normally capitalized within internal institutional contexts) are lower-case (“university library” not “University library”). The same goes for titles (“I spoke to the dean” not “I spoke to the Dean.”) It’s standard not to capitalize such terms when used before an audience outside the institutional context and when not attached directly to the person’s name.
Appendix A: Permission Letters

While the letter requests permission to use illustrative material, please modify it as needed if you are requesting textual matter, poetry, etc. Be explicit and specific about the material you wish to use and are requesting permission for. A sample letter appears on the next page and has been furnished by our publisher. You may change it as needed to suit the circumstances of your permissions request. This form may also be used (and modified as needed) to request permission from adult students if you plan to quote from their writing. Appendix B includes some discussion of this procedure and also includes a template for requesting permission from students who are under the age of 18.
Dear [Permissions Coordinator/Author]:

I am writing to request your permission to reproduce [name or description of excerpt/photograph, etc.] from [name of collection or source] [in my discussion of/in a gallery of photos in/as a frontispiece for/on the cover of/ key to text in/etc.] the following book [and for subsequent publicity purposes (if the item is a photograph)]:

Author's Name/Chapter Title/Book Title/Book Editor's Name

The book is scheduled to be published in [month, year] in (cloth/paper/digital) editions. For the printed versions, the total run will be approximately 1,000 copies. The approximate list price will be $_______ (cloth) and $______ (paper). I would like to secure nonexclusive world rights in all languages and for all editions. The work will be published by Parlor Press, an independent scholarly publisher.

By signing, you warrant that [you/your library/your organization/etc.] [is/are] the copyright owner of the rights granted herein. If [you/your library/your organization/etc.] is not the copyright holder, or if for world rights I need additional permission from another source, would you kindly so indicate? I enclose a duplicate of this letter for your records. If you need additional information, please contact me at the number or email address listed below. Thank you for your timely consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

(insert your name and contact information here)

The above request is approved on the conditions specified above and on the understanding that full credit will be given to the source.

Approved by: ________________________________

Date: __________________________

Wording of credit line (if applicable):

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________
Appendix B: Citing Student Writing and Requesting Student Permission

NCTE has published guidelines for the ethical use of student writing in published research, “Guidelines for the Ethical Treatment of Students and Student Writing in Composition Studies,” available on the WWW at http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/level/coll/107670.htm

Here is the most relevant information for authors from this NCTE position statement:

G. Quoting, paraphrasing, and reporting student statements
In their publications, presentations, and other research reports, composition specialists quote, paraphrase, or otherwise report students’ written statements only with the students’ permission. When quoting, paraphrasing, or reporting students’ spoken statements, composition specialists do so without including the students’ names or identifying information unless they have the students’ permission to identify them. When the students are minors, composition specialists obtain the permission of the students’ parents or guardians and the assent of the minors. When composition specialists have used a consent process approved by an IRB or similar committee, they have obtained the necessary permission.

Composition specialists report students’ written and spoken statements accurately. They interpret the statements in ways that are faithful to the students’ intentions, and they provide contextual information that will enable others to understand the statements accurately. When in doubt, composition specialists check the accuracy of their reports and interpretations with the students. They are especially sensitive to the need to check their interpretations when the students are from a cultural, ethnic, or other group different than their own. They always obtain permission to use a statement they believe the student made in confidence with the expectation that it would remain private.

When discussing the students’ statements that they quote, paraphrase, or otherwise report, composition specialists do so in ways that are fair and serious and cause no harm.

Our publisher, Parlor Press, requires that authors request permission to reprint student writing in all cases. When the students are minors (under the age of 18), permission must be obtained from the student’s parent or guardian and the student must also assent to use of the writing. For the purposes of requesting permission to reprint the work of minors, we suggest you use the template on the next page. When the students are 18 or older, you may use the permission request form included in Appendix A.
Minor Student Release For Art/Writing

I hereby grant permission to reproduce and publish the artwork/writing of my child / children ____________________________ (name[s]) in educational publications, and any promotional materials related to them, published or copyrighted by Parlor Press, its successors and assigns. I understand that the artwork/writing may be published in any form or format that the publisher may desire. This agreement constitutes the entire understanding of the parties relating to its subject matter and is irrevocable.

__________________________________________________
Signature (Parent or Guardian) Date

__________________________________________________
Printed Name

__________________________________________________
Address

Description of Art or Writing

___________________________________________________________________________
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