

Setting and Communicating Reasonable Expectations

Provide detailed assignments with clear expectations.

Some students have never written essays in U.S. style, and generally, students will write the way they have been taught. Help students by being specific and clear about your expectations.

- See Moodle for example rubrics designed to communicate expectations clearly for developing writers.
- Use the following key to discuss and label parts of example papers to illustrate what you expect and where:

TS = topic sentence: states a main idea/claim for the paragraph

S = summary: description of issue, background, or source

A = analysis: statements after each piece or pair of evidence (“In other words,” “By X, the author Y,” “This/such data/scenario/theory [does what?]”)

Trans = transition: first sentence of a paragraph that links next idea/claim to last

CA = counterargument: an opposite perspective, a limiting factor

Thesis = thesis statement: sentence at end of introduction that captures main claim of the paper (ask students to underscore or *italicize* their intended thesis)

Provide clear examples.

Share successful papers and explain what made them successful. Explain each part of a paper’s logic and how it is reflected at key structural points.

- See the following handouts on the Writing Center’s Student Resources page: *Structuring Introductions*, *Structuring Body Paragraphs*, and *Structuring Conclusions*.
- See Moodle for example papers that exceed, meet, and do not meet reasonable expectations.
- Assign reading homework from the introduction section of a citation style from the Hacker manual; for example, pp. 109-130 detail elements of a Western MLA-style argument.

Lead students through a pre-writing process before drafting begins.

Use assignments like annotated bibliographies, outlines, or working thesis statement proposals to show students where you expect them to go next. An annotated bibliography assignment allows international students to practice summarizing, which develops fluency, and to develop a stance, which helps them meet U.S. paper conventions. A presentation about their research topic helps them practice manipulating vocabulary and clearly describing their goals.

- See the following handouts on the Writing Center’s Student Resources page: *Three Outline Stages: How to Develop an Argument Plan*, *Evaluating Resources and Creating an Annotated Bibliography*, and *Ten “Moves” Scholars Make to Find Meaningful Tension*.
- Contact the Writing Center to schedule a workshop or receive a resource list that supports your assignment.