

English Portfolio Contents: 2 papers, 1 letter/essay, and folder.

Heading: Student I.D. Number and Course Code (See instructor). Delete all references to your name and your instructor's name. Staple the pages of each item together.

Revision Strategies for Papers and a Cover Letter/Essay

Structure:

- Introduction catches the reader's attention.
- Body contains details.
- Conclusion summarizes the paper.

Paragraphs:

- Discuss a single idea
- Limit to less than a full page

Sentences:

- Avoid fragments and run-ons. The following is a run-on sentence:

College is too serious I am not ready to grow up.

- Subject and verbs, and nouns and pronouns should agree. The following sentence has a subject and verb that do not agree:

Everybody is dancing having a good time and there is a lot of girls dancing around getting crazy showing off their body.

Words:

- Verbs should stay in the same tense.
- Adjectives modify nouns and adverbs modify verbs. Revise sentences in your own paper like the following:

Josh and I started working real hard running and doing drills and going to the batting cages.

- Choose the word you mean to say. The following sentence uses two words that the writer most likely did not mean to use:

If theres not a lot of girls at the dance, your going to leave fast.

Letters or Essays

Note: Some English students are asked to write a portfolio cover letter, while English 101 students may be asked to write a portfolio essay, which may also be called a commentary, submission notes, or self-reflective essay.

Overview

- The cover letter, like an essay, contains well-organized, fully developed ideas, a sense of audience, and a purpose. A cover letter introduces the reader to the chosen papers in the portfolio and talks about the writer's method of writing and revising the essays. A carefully revised and proofread cover letter is organized and is free of surface, mechanical errors. Readers should be able to hear the writer's voice in the cover letter. Use 12 pt. fonts: Calibri, Century Schoolbook, Bookman Old Style, or Times New Roman are neat, readable fonts. Avoid bold, italic type styles.
- Introduce the readers to your writing experiences this semester. What have you learned about yourself as a writer? Now that you have completed the course, compare your previous ideas and methods on writing to what you are doing and thinking now, explaining similarities and/ or differences.

Writing Process

- Introduce the titles of the essays you are submitting in your portfolio. Why did you choose these essays? What message are you trying to get across in these papers?
- Tell the readers how you start your papers; for example, explain the pre-writing strategies that have worked best when you were gathering ideas for the papers you are submitting: cluster or web diagrams, free-writing, listing, outlining.
- Explain how you organize your ideas when you write. Why are you the best person to write these essays? How do you get your message across to the reader?
- Explain what you find most challenging about writing and what have you improved on this semester. Introductions or conclusions? Staying focused? Flow of ideas? Tying everything together? Eliminating awkward wording? Adding detailed examples, explanations, or descriptions?
- Explain your revision process. What are you able to change about the essays to make them better?

- If you could write these two papers one more time, what would you do differently?

Closing

- Address your reasons for thinking the portfolio demonstrates writing skills needed to succeed in your present and future writing classes. Stress that you will continue to work hard to improve your writing. Thank the committee for reviewing your portfolio.

Grading Criteria

Basic Questions about Reading Reflection

Audience: Does the cover letter address an audience of instructors (who were not the instructor of this class)? Does the student explain what was learned in the class, including specific reading, writing, and/or studying strategies they learned? Is it clear which texts were read for the class and why the student has selected these reading reflections and/or essays to share with the committee?

Purpose: Do the reading reflections (or essays) show a purpose beyond reporting what was read or simply summarizing? Do they have a reason for writing?

Thought: Do the reading reflections show interpretation of the texts assigned? Are they organized in a way that the reader can follow?

Synthesis: Has the student been able to refer to the specific details from the reading while also connecting those details to their own thoughts, ideas, and/or experiences?

Basic Questions about Essay Quality

Purposeful Development: Does the writing have a sense of purpose? How well developed is the writing? (For instance, do the essays include plenty of examples, reasons, details, descriptions, anecdotes, and/or evidence)? Is the writer able to go beyond producing only a few short paragraphs?

The Writing Situation (Rhetorical Context): Does the writer demonstrate a good awareness of audience, of the topic, and of their stance/role toward the audience and topic?

Thought: Does the writing make the reader think? Has the writer gone beyond just stating the obvious? (Doing so might take the form of inferences, connections, analysis, logic, reason, persuasion, humor, analogies, mature outlook, etc.)

Order: Are the essays arranged for maximum effectiveness? Does the writing avoid seeming formulaic? How coherent is the writing – that is, does it hold together? How effective are the transitions?

Language: Are sentences generally clear? How correct are the mechanics? To what extent is there a real writing style (for instance: alternation of sentence lengths, use of rhythms, variety in sentence structure, etc.)?

Self-Assessment/Cover Letter: How aware is the writer of his/her own writing process? Of his/her strengths and weaknesses? How accurate and authentic is the writer in the use of terminology related to writing? (For instance: Is the writer merely echoing what others have said? Grabbing at frequently heard terms? Or does the writer reflect on their writing in a convincing way?)