

Introducing Student Writing Support to your students—a script you may use or adapt

What we do:

Student Writing Support provides free writing instruction for all University of Minnesota students—graduate and undergraduate—at all stages of the writing process. In face-to-face and online collaborative consultations, we help students develop productive writing habits and revision strategies.

Who we are:

- Undergraduates, graduate students, and professional staff members, including multilingual writer specialists (who have degrees in teaching English as a Second Language).
- We come from a wide variety of disciplines, and are trained to work across the disciplines. (Our consultant biographies are available at <http://writing.umn.edu/sws/consultants.html>.)

Where we are:

- 15 Nicholson Hall (make an appointment online at mySWS [writing.umn.edu/mysws], in person, or by phone [612.625.1893]; limited walk-in availability)
- 9 Appleby Hall (walk-in only)
- SWS.online (make an appointment online at mySWS [writing.umn.edu/mysws]), where you interact with the consultant through submitting your documents and meeting for an online chat.

What we do/How we do it:

A writing consultation is a conversation between a writer and a consultant. During that conversation, the participants will set an agenda for the session, talk about the work in progress, and work together to meet the writer's goals.

1. When you come in for a session, the consultant will ask you some basic questions:
 - What is the assignment?
 - When is it due?
 - How far along in the process are you?
 - Have you had any response to your topic/draft?
 - What would you like to work on today?
2. You and the consultant will determine a realistic goal for the session, e.g., interpret the assignment, develop a thesis or outline, work on organization and transitions, practice revisions to improve sentence clarity, learn conventions of grammar, punctuation, citations, etc. By the end of the session, you will have a clearer idea of what your next steps will be.
3. In general, you will find that we work globally to locally (i.e., from big issues, like organization, to small ones, like grammar), making sure that you address all aspects of the assignment.

What we are not and cannot do:

- We aren't a remedial service. We see students from all across campus, from first-year students to PhD dissertation writers.
- We aren't a proofreading service. We won't mark or correct all of the errors in a paper, but we will help you develop strategies for proofreading your own paper.
- We can't guarantee or predict grades.

How best to use us:

1. The more prepared you are, the better we can help you. Please bring:
 - the assignment sheet (and any additional instructions or grading criteria from your instructor)

- any notes or drafts you've written
 - any feedback/comments you've gotten
 - specific questions about what you want to work on
2. Don't be shy about coming in to brainstorm
 - You don't have to have a draft before you come see us.
 - Some of the best sessions are planning sessions.
 - Brainstorming with us can help you avoid writer's block.
 3. Plan ahead: come early and come often
 - Use us to help you structure your paper-writing process (i.e., make mini-deadlines)
 - During our busy times (e.g., midterms and finals), it's better to make an appointment ahead of time
 4. Try different consultants and find one or two that you work well with
 5. Come with reasonable expectations—if your paper is long, choose a section to work on.
 6. Remember that you're the expert. It's your paper, and we can help you clarify your ideas--but they're still your ideas!
 7. If you're confused about the assignment, we can help you develop questions to take to your instructor, but we can't tell you for sure what the assignment is.