

WELCOME TO THE WRITING CENTER

AT THE SCHOOL OF THE
ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO

PRE-APPOINTMENT CHECKLIST

Please come with clear goals you would like to work toward, concerns you would like to address, and/or any other questions.

The Writing Center welcomes all types and genres of text at every stage of writing—from idea generation to final drafts—but we expect your session to be self-directed.

Have a Google Doc that is ready to be shared with your tutor, or if your appointment is in-person, a printout of your material.

If you are working on an assignment or application statement that comes with a prompt, please include it in the document you share with your tutor.

Double-check for originality. Make sure you haven't included any uncited material that is not your own. If your citations aren't finished, please make sure that they are clearly marked.

Take a look at the glossary below in order to familiarize yourself with some of the terms and processes that will likely be used in your session. **Mark ones you are particularly interested in working on with your tutor.**

○ BRAINSTORMING

Being free and open in forming your connection to the material is an important part of arriving at valuable content.

Examples: note-taking, mind-mapping, finding patterns/connections, asking questions, annotating texts

○ FINDING YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Tutors in the Writing Center can offer careful listening as you explore avenues of inquiry, point out directions in which you can expand your thoughts, and share what stands out to them.

○ CRITICAL THINKING

This means probing your subject beyond obvious layers of meaning and finding wider and deeper perspectives.

Subtext: finding the implicit meanings of a text—the underlying messages that are not explicitly stated or shown.

Depth: exploring significant details, difficulties, or complexities that others might overlook.

Logic: coming to a conclusion based on reasoned justifications of a belief.

Do all of your thoughts make sense in combination?

Does your flow or organization of ideas raise any contradictions?

Precision/Specificity: avoiding words and descriptions that are overly general, abstract, and vague in favor of concrete and detailed information.

Clarity: conveying sharp, coherent information or ideas to a reader. (Clarity is not usually the starting point of writing but instead an element of polishing later drafts, after we've given ourselves the creative freedom to write with abandon.)

○ CLAIMS (AKA THESES)

In general, a claim needs to do more than just state an opinion. It should lead to analysis as well as engaged consideration of the wider significance of your stance and/or of the topic/work you are investigating or making.

○ ORDER, ORGANIZATION, & STRUCTURE

The stage at which you impose structure on your writing is a personal choice, as is the way you go about doing so. Tutors can help you find a technique that works for you, and identify areas in later drafts of your writing that might benefit from tighter or clearer organization.

- **DRAFTING** Elements of drafting can include paragraphs and topic sentences; transitions & flow; adequate context; summaries and paraphrasing; deep analysis; rich descriptions; introductions and conclusions; and more.
- **POLISHING** Elements of polishing a final draft can include smoothing out tone & style; checking for active versus passive voice; practicing concision; checking for repetition and redundancy; diction and syntax choices; grammar and mechanics; and more.
- **FORMATTING** MLA, CMS, APA and AP source citation styles; in-text citations; footnotes/endnotes; and more.

OUR GOALS

AT THE WRITING CENTER

To encourage excitement about making original discoveries

To help students/artists find their unique voice so as to best represent themselves, their art, and their convictions

To invite students to find connections between the art-making process and the writing process

To relay strategies that empower students to recognize areas of development on their own

To ask questions that prompt deep thinking, expanded perspectives, and self-examination