



*Writing Initiatives*  
University of Alberta



*Centre for Writers*



International Undergraduate  
Academic Success Program

Academic Success Program  
International Undergraduate

Welcome



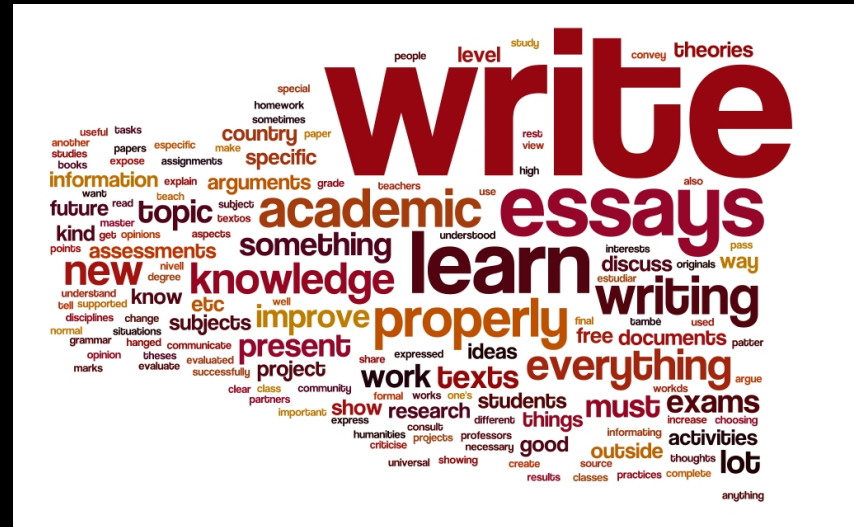
Susan Chaudoir, PhD(c)  
Faculty of Education &  
Scholarship of Teaching & Learning



Madeline Smith, Year 5  
Faculty of Arts &  
Centre for Writers

# We will introduce you to:

- writing
- Canadian or North American expectations of academic writing



# We will not be able to

- Make you a perfect writer
- every type of writing assignment
- good grades





# Presentation Topics – Day 1

1. Cultures of writing
2. Writing for the disciplines
3. Types of essays and assignments
4. Thoughts on the writing process

# Cultures of Writing

- Expectations of writing can vary
  - from culture to culture
    - Japanese culture: job of reader to understand
    - Canadian culture: job of writer to understand
  - from instructor to instructor
    - Science professors
    - English professors
    - Biology 101, different sections

# Cultures of Writing

- Expectations of writing can vary
  - from person to person
    - Susan's story of writing in Scotland
    - Madeline's story of writing in first year

What are your expectations of writing  
at the University of Alberta?

# Your Culture of Writing

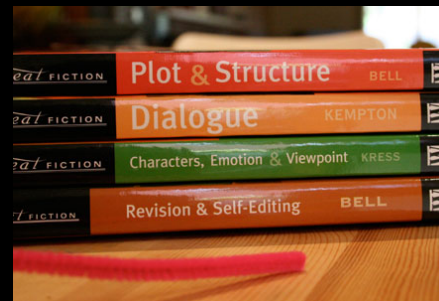
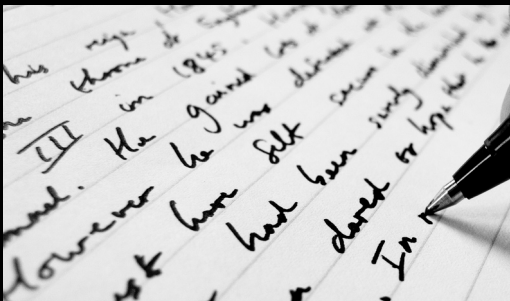
Please share  
your culture of writing  
from your home country



# At the University of Alberta

## Writer is responsible to meet reader's expectations

[Communicating in English \(YouTube Video 5:33\)](#)



# Academic Expectations of Students

It is up to you to ask questions

- Whom are you writing for?
- What have they told you to do?
- What do they expect to read?
- What do you want to tell them?



**WHO**

**WHAT**

**WHERE**

**WHEN**

**WHY**

**HOW**

# Our Advice to You

Common communication problems  
between instructors and students

- ① Instructors assume you understand everything you read
- ② Students assume instructors tell them everything they need to write the assignment successfully



# Our Advice to You

## START WRITING EARLY

September						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

October						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

November						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

December						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				
FROM: <a href="http://pgoh13.com">http://pgoh13.com</a>						



START WRITING



ASSIGNMENT DUE

Take a  
**BREAK**



GET OUT OF YOUR CHAIR,  
IT'S **KILLING** YOU



# Academic Expectations

Rhetorical in nature  
**Purpose**  
**Audience**

# Purpose

## Direct and explicit

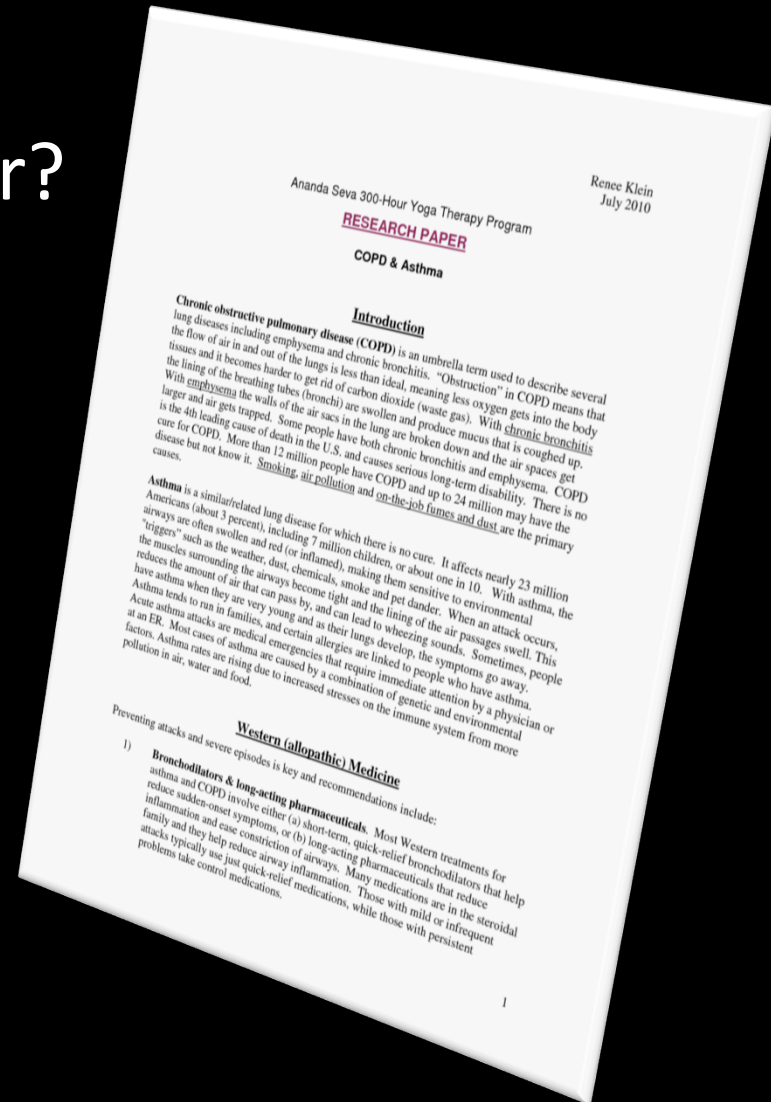
- What are you writing?
- If it is not clear, ask your instructor
- Are you writing a:
  - Description of a lab experiment
  - Exposition of a love story
  - Argument for global economic trade
  - Reflection on your field experience
  - Review of literature on genetically modified corn



# Audience

## Direct and explicit

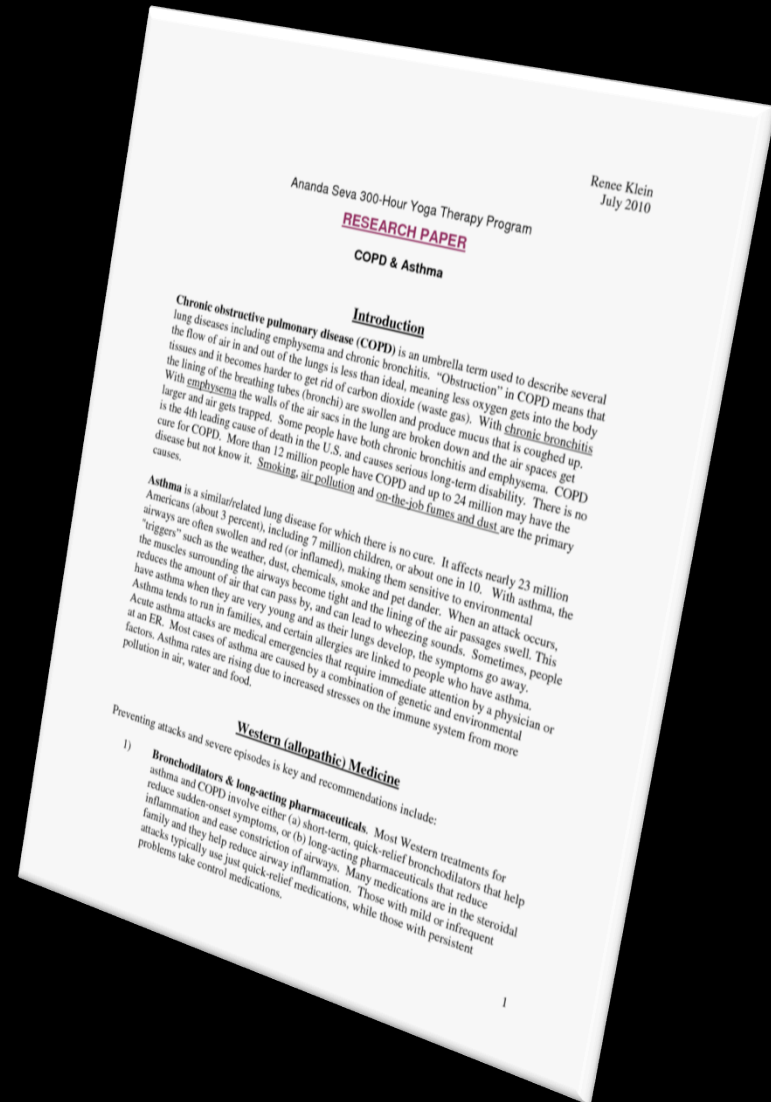
- Who are you writing for?
- Your instructor or marker
- Guide your reader
- For example,
  - Use headings
  - Use bold text



# Audience

## Direct and explicit

- Guide your reader
- For example,
  - Use a parallel structure
    - First, second, third
    - In this paper I will do X, Y, Z
    - List in exact order: X, Y, Z



# Audience

## Direct and explicit

- Guide your reader
- For example,
  - Use clear transitions
    - “First...second...last”
    - “Therefore...”,
    - “Because of this...”,
    - “However...”
    - “As noted above...”,
    - “Next...”



# Academic Expectations

Direct, explicit, and rhetorical in nature:

- Clearly understand the **purpose** of your assignment
- Clearly understand who your **audience** (your reader)
- If you do not know, then **ask questions**



# Writing for the Disciplines

Academic Writing

**Differs by**  
**Discipline**

# Writing for the Disciplines

- An academic discipline is:
  - engineering, biology, philosophy, sociology, mathematics, geology, law, medicine, music
- Each discipline has:
  - its own **expectations** of speaking, writing, and engaging in study, reading, writing, and presenting

# Writing for the Disciplines

Different disciplines have different expectations:

- **Content:** What counts as evidence?
- **Organization:** How are papers structured?
- **Style:** What types of sentences are used?  
What forms of voice are used?  
How is topic introduced?  
What kind of style guide is followed?

# Expectations by Different Disciplines

## English

- Active voice
- Direct quote sources
- No headings
- MLA style guide
- Analysis
- Writing expectations:
  - “close reading”
  - “analyze”

## Science (Chemistry)

- Passive voice
- Paraphrase sources
- Headings
- CSE style guide
- Synthesis
- Writing expectations
  - “observe”
  - “explain”

Take a  
**BREAK**



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Types of essays and assignments

# Writing Assignment Instructions

# Writing Assignments

Following instructions is  
critical for student success

**INSTRUCTIONS: Where are they?**

- Syllabus or course outline
- Handouts given in class
- Posted on eClass or Course Moodle

# Writing Assignments

Essay (for example for an English course)

Lab Report (for a Biology course)

Reflection (for a Sociology course)

Journal (for a Psychology course)

Letter to the Editor (for an English course)

Research Paper (all disciplines)

Term Paper (all disciplines)

Group Project (all disciplines)



# BREAK INTO SMALL GROUPS



# WRITING ASSIGNMENT EXAMPLES

1. What is the assignment called?
2. What are you being asked to do?
3. How many tasks are required?
4. Look for verbs.
5. How you would write this?

Take a  
**BREAK**

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In Closing

Writer-Responsible  
**Culture**

# Writer-Responsible Culture

- Good writers start long before due date
- Good writers revise more than once
- Good writers learn to clarify expectations
- Good writers follow instructions

“Because” statements:

claim: “I argue...”, “This paper discusses...”

reason: “because of...”

Example: I **argue** that water should not be privatized **because** corporate control of water supplies <sup>(1)</sup> **would increase costs to users,** <sup>(2)</sup> **reduce public access to limited resources,** and <sup>(3)</sup> **potentially cause greater health risks for the public.**

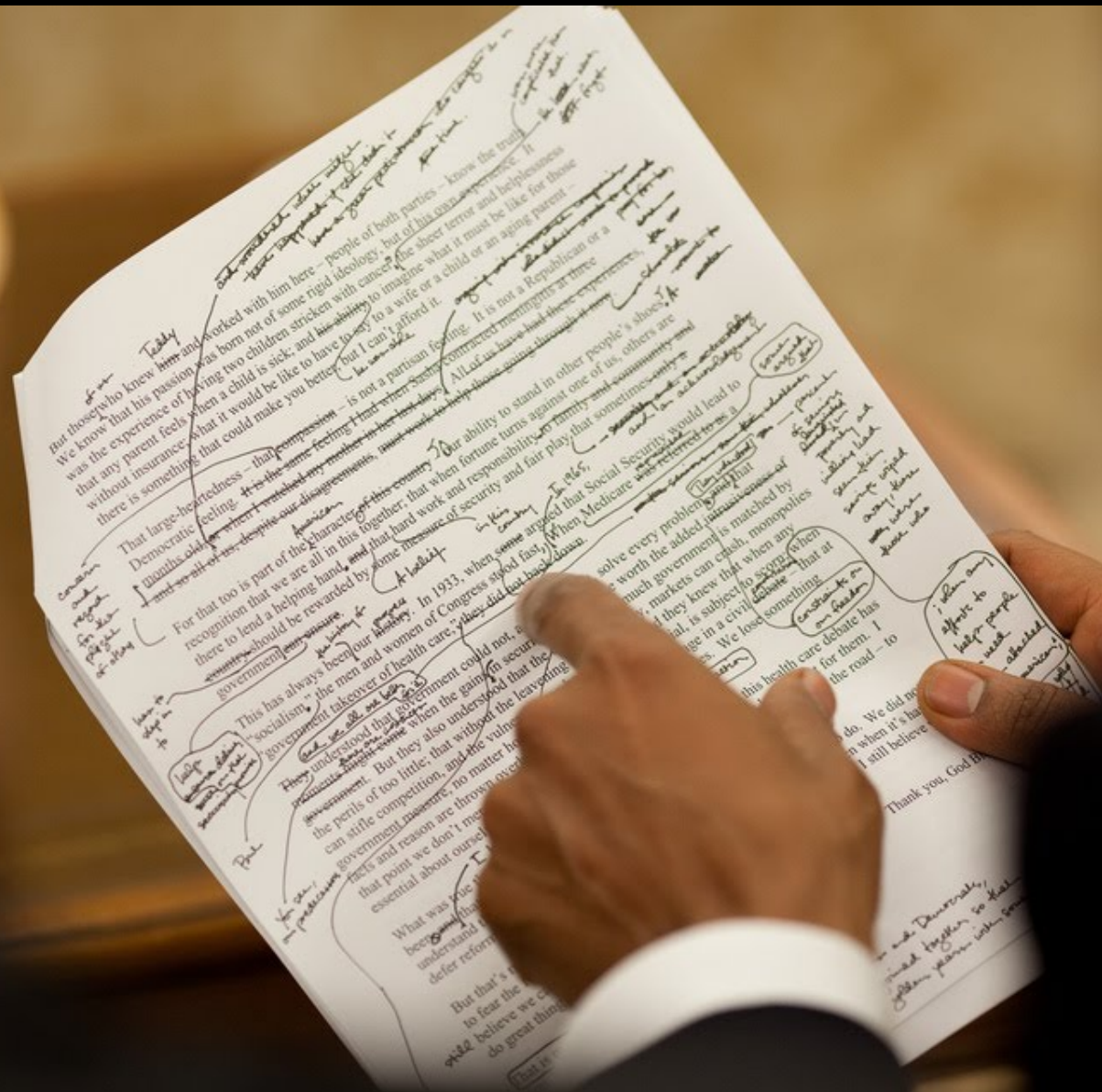


# Sample Paragraph

“This paper examines jet lag: an unwanted state of fatigue incurred after crossing several time zones quickly. Overall, beneficial information is provided for travelers so that they will be more aware of how to prevent jet lag. The first section uses four sources for describing jet lag’s definition. The causes are explained by three credible sources. The effects are thoroughly explained and commented on by two interviewees. Then, who jet lag affects will be comprehensively explained. Last, there is a description of the techniques for reducing jet lag by utilizing information from journals and online articles. Jet lag can occur in anybody’s life if they fly; this paper provides methods to counteract its effects.”

# Sample Paragraph: *Purpose/focus*

- “**This paper examines jet lag**: an unwanted state of fatigue incurred after crossing several time zones quickly. Overall, beneficial information is provided for travelers so that they will be more aware of **how to prevent jet lag**. The first section uses four sources for describing jet lag’s **definition**. The **causes** are explained by three credible sources. The **effects** are thoroughly explained and commented on by two interviewees. Then, **who jet lag affects** will be comprehensively explained. Last, there is a description of the **techniques for reducing jet lag** by utilizing information from journals and online articles. Jet lag can occur in anybody’s life if they fly; **this paper provides methods to counteract its effects.**”





# Opening the Conversation



How is my APA  
formatting?



**Year 1**

I'm stuck on  
my thesis.



**Year 2**



# UPCOMING WORKSHOPS

## More on Writing Process

- Understanding writing tasks
- Writing parts of an essay
- Self-editing strategies
- Grammar tips
- Research in library
- Resources on campus

