

Your Final Portfolio and Prospective Essay are your culminating assignments for the quarter. They are the sum of your work and a testament to the dedication, reading, writing, and critical thinking (not to mention sweat and effort) you have engaged these past weeks. The Prospective Essay, which will be in the form of a cover letter, is the crowning piece of your metacognitive perspective on writing that you've been developing. To prepare for this assignment, look back at your major papers, your workshops, your Process Journals, your readings, your homework. You have read and written and learned a lot in this course! Then look ahead to the goals you will set to become a more successful college reader, writer, and thinker. Because our class emphasizes writing as a process aided by metacognitive awareness of one's writing practices, this "cover letter" essay will necessarily draw on your recent experiences, challenges, successes, and reflections.

Before You Begin Writing

In order to complete this assignment, you will have to take some time and really reflect on all your writing experiences—Past, Present, and Future. Here are some ideas to get you started with brainstorming and prewriting (you don't need to address every single question asked here in your cover letter):

- What successes did you have during the quarter and what have you accomplished? What difficulties did you face in this quarter's assignments and why were those tasks difficult? Reread everything you have written carefully (and all those comments you received). What do you observe about your writing? Do you see any recurring themes in your Process Journals, your Strength & Difficulty Inventories, in your self-reflections and freewrites? You've all achieved a lot this quarter, so give yourself credit—take some time to reflect on what you have worked on and what you are good at when it comes to reading, writing, and learning!
- Break down your writing difficulties as specifically as possible. (For example, if you struggle with writing claims, think about the following: What were your most and least successful attempts to write interpretive claims? Do you have trouble recognizing interpretive claims in other people's work? Did any of your peers' papers have effective claims? Why were they effective? Are your claims too broad, too narrow, or too obvious? Why? What skills or strategies are needed to write an effective claim?) Make a short list with short notes about each item.
- What have you learned about working through these difficulties? How can you most effectively work through difficulty in various situations? What writing or other academic resources have been useful for you, and why? Figure out which one or two of these things would be the most telling, the most important to talk about, and the best evidence to show that you have identified a challenge, worked at it, and improved your writing.
- How would you describe your writing process? When does it serve you well, and when does it not? What are possible alternative processes to try? Have you started to view writing as a process rather than just a product? Why/why not?

- Think about “prospection” (this just means looking ahead): What skills or strategies did you bring to this class, what skills or strategies did you gain in this class, and how will you build on them to become a more effective college writer in the future?

Goals and Outcomes

In this assignment, we are asking you to think about your personal and specific experiences as a writer, both before this class, and as a consequence of it, and analyze how and why you think about writing the way you do today. How will these attitudes you have toward writing serve you in the future? What specific things have you learned about yourself as an individual and as a student at this university that will help you in the years to come? Have you identified any difficulties you have, and do you now have strategies to combat them? Your essay functions as a kind of academic, intellectual, and rhetorical self-assessment of what the reading and writing you have selected do (and do not do), and a self-reflection of how you see yourself participating (or not participating) in the class and classroom. A superior essay will incorporate the language of the various readings, the theories on literacy and writing, the course description, the assignment sheets, as well as cite your peers’ and my assessments of your work to support your self-assessment. Strategically (and briefly) quoting or paraphrasing passages from your own work (both strong and weak samples) is another way to make your argument concrete. In addition, this paper will be impeccably formatted according to MLA guidelines, will have a clear organizational structure, and will have a complex claim with specific details as evidence. This is your chance to really demonstrate all that you have learned and all that you have become as a writer...we can’t wait to read it!

Your Prospective Essay will take the form of a **cover letter** for your final portfolio. The essay must be 2-4 pages, single-spaced, in business letter format and should **selectively** include, describe, synthesize, and critique the following:

- makes a claim about your experience, your exploration, and your progress in ENGL 108, in reading and writing
- identifies, explicates, and demonstrates how you understand the key ENGL 108 outcomes, concepts, skills, and strategies; draws specifically instructor comments and readings
- makes good use of your Strength and Difficulty inventories and Process Journal entries; considers how you have learned about working through reading and writing challenges
- uses the language of the course outcomes, the assessment rubric, and the assignments
- discusses your writing process, engagement with the course texts, and research
- considers how your definition of literacy has changed over the quarter
- assesses your participation in workshopping and peer review; engages how you participated in the class and in the academic arena
- imagines how you will approach future academic writing assignments; argues for how you will transfer skills and practices and strategies to other classes
- offers a final self-assessment in terms of evaluation and grade

Guidelines and Due Dates

Format: 2-4 pages, typed, single-spaced, 1” margins, title, proper business letter format, 12-point Times Roman font, MLA style, proofread and edited, stapled

Due: Friday, August 7 at 12:00 NOON
Turned in with your Final Portfolio