Course Learning Outcomes for Unit VII

Upon completion of this unit, students should be able to:

3. Apply the steps of the writing process and appropriate research and citation methods to write essays, literary analyses, and research papers with identifiable thesis statements.
   3.1 Explain the proper methods for using email.
   3.2 Identify the various types of public writing people encounter in the workplace.

Reading Assignment

*The Little, Brown Compact Handbook:*

Chapter 9: Academic Writing

Chapter 10 Section a: Using Techniques of Critical Reading

Chapter 14 Section b: Writing Business Letters

Chapter 14 Section c: Writing a Job Application

Chapter 14 Section d: Writing Memos, Reports, and Proposals

Chapter 14 Section e: Writing for Community Work

Unit Lesson

As you are reviewing the comments made by your peers regarding your research papers and preparing to complete your final edits and finishing touches, we can discuss some other forms of writing that you will likely encounter in and out of college. When you first enter college, you are expected to begin a transformation into an academic writer. Basically, you are expected to study your course material, understand the language used in your course material, and be able to express yourself by asking questions and completing assignments using that language. Hopefully, by the end of this unit, you will understand more about how to begin this transformation.

The best way to begin your transformation into an academic writer is to listen in class and take notes. If you take useful notes, you will begin to form a basic understanding of what your professor is trying to teach you as well as have course material to study in preparation for exams. This can be done even if you are taking a completely online course. You can make your own notes from the professor’s written lectures or any multimedia material found in the course.

Sometimes, new college students find that they have difficulty comprehending material they are reading for their classes. This can stem from not being familiar with the language used in the subjects they are studying or simply having to learn a new way of focusing on the material. A process for learning how to focus better on the material can include taking notes while you are reading, previewing the material to get an idea of what is being covered, reading, rereading, and summarizing what you have read.

This course has been teaching you the basic skills you will need to become an academic writer. Although other disciplines that you will enter in your college career may require some different writing conventions, you will find that they all pretty much follow the same process that you have learned here. Keep the skills you have learned here in mind as you travel through your college career.
Another important point to remember as you are becoming an academic writer is that you should always use academic language. In the United States, Standard American English is considered to be the language of academics, as well as the language of business, government, media, and other professions. Standard American English can vary, of course, based on the situation you find yourself in, whether you are talking to a classmate, a professor, or making a speech. However, there are some basic features of Standard American English that are common such as the use of proper grammar and use of a standard vocabulary; however, there is still room to allow your own voice to come through your writing. It is important to note, however, that the use of too much informal language in an academic setting can lead to readers not taking your work seriously and assuming that you have no idea what you are talking about. However, you should make sure that you do not overcompensate in your writing and sound too wordy and stiff because people will simply lose interest and stop reading. In order to determine the right balance, take some time to read forms of academic writing to help you become familiar with that style. The Supplemental Reading section of this unit includes some of the pages in *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook* that will help remind you of the conventions used in Standard American English. As you are preparing your research paper for submission, it is a good idea to refer to those pages and make sure that you are following the rules of proper grammar and usage.

Another form of writing that you will encounter in and out of college is online writing. One of the most prevalent forms of online writing used in college and in the professional world is email. When you are preparing to write an email, take some time to think about to whom you are writing and the purpose of your email. If you are writing to a friend or even a classmate, it is perfectly acceptable to use informal English. However, in an academic setting or a work setting, using Standard American English is always the best policy.

Remember that when sending out an email message, you should only send it to people who need to read it. For example, maybe your department at work is split into more than one team of coworkers, and the email you want to send out only applies to your team. In that case, you should only send the email to the individual members of your team instead of sending it to the whole department. People become easily irritated if they receive too many emails that do not apply to them.

Another extremely important point to remember when composing an email message is to think about exactly who is going to see your message. This is especially important when you are using a work email account. Never say anything in an email that you would not say in a printed document. Emails do not just disappear into cyberspace once they are delivered, and work emails should never be considered private. Companies can and will pull emails from their servers at any time, so if you are complaining about your boss and saying unkind comments about him or her in an email to a coworker, it could very well come back to bite you at any time!

College is not the only place in which you are expected to write. Once you get into the world of work, you will still continue to write, and you will use the same basic process for writing that you have learned in this course. However, the form of writing you will do may be slightly different depending on the type of document you are expected to compose. Some of these forms of writing include business letters, resumes, memos, reports, proposals, flyers, newsletters, and brochures. Be sure to read through pages 126-136 in *The Little, Brown Compact Handbook* for more information on these forms of writing.

**Suggested Reading**

*The Little, Brown Compact Handbook*

- **Part 4**: Sentence Parts and Patterns
- **Part 5**: Punctuation
- **Part 6**: Spelling and Mechanics