

Penn-Trafford High School
College Writing (2025-2026)
Room 143/Mrs. Sekera
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724-744-4496 Ext. 1143

Welcome to College Writing! I look forward to working with you this year! The following are guidelines and information about our class.

Course Description:

This course is directed towards preparing college-bound students for college writing. Students will be required to write in a myriad of genres in preparation for the types of writing required for collegiate success. Through connections with local higher education institutions, we will focus on closing the gap between high school and college. Students will produce effective writing pieces, from business letters to synthesis and critical essays.

Objectives:

You will:

- Utilize stages of the writing process to refine skills in various modes of writing.
- Analyze and evaluate rhetorical situations as you choose, criticize, defend, and challenge works of nonfiction.
- Write critically by developing paragraph structures that allow you to analyze different interpretations and develop your own argument, supported by evidence.
- Employ voice, audience awareness, and conciseness in writing.
- Understand how to dissect a college writing assignment across various academic disciplines.
- Compose effective thesis statements and break away from the standard 5-paragraph essay.
- Create a curation of revised essays for publication.

Materials Needed

Bring to class daily:

- iPad (with charger)
- 3-ring binder (1 1/2") with pockets
- Pencil/Pen
- Earbuds or headphones that pair with your iPad (occasionally)

Learning Activities

- Individual and group activities
- Reading
- Writing
- Informal discussion
- Video/Audio-based activities
- Projects
- Presentations
- Guided and independent practice
- Class discussion
- Senior research project/Culminating project

Assessments:

Assignments in this course will align with the stages of the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing). Students will receive a rubric for formal writing assignments. Writing assignments may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Personal/Scholarship Essay
- Business and Technical Writing
- Concept/Extended Definition Essay
- Rhetorical Analysis
- Argumentative Writing
- Research
- Critical Review
- Satire
- Podcast
- Culminating Assessment/Senior Project

Other assessment types:

- Teacher observation and questioning
- Individual and group projects
- Self and peer evaluation
- Homework
- Participation
- Presentations

Determination of Grade

Cumulative points convert to a percent, then the Penn-Trafford School District grading scale is followed to determine a grade. The grading scale is as follows:

90%-100%:	A
80%-89%:	B
70%-79%:	C
60%-69%:	D
Below 60%:	F

Classroom Expectations:

Please be:

- **prompt.** Three tardies will result in a teacher detention.
- **prepared.** Complete your assignments on time and well. The assignment is late if it is not complete when I am ready to collect, view, or discuss it. **I will accept most assignments by the next class period for half credit, but will not accept them for credit after that time.** You will submit your assignments via both Google Classroom and printed copy.
- **involved.** You are required to fully participate in class, including speaking in front of the class, working with a partner or in cooperative groups, answering and asking questions, and participating in discussions, to name a few activities. **Cell phones (including earbuds, unless you are using them for an iPad activity) are not to be used during class; you will deposit them in the cell phone caddy prior to the beginning of class and will not retrieve them until the end of class.** See page 28 of the [PTHS Student Handbook](#) for this information.
- **positive.** Work your hardest and your best. Please see me for assistance of any kind. I am here to help you and work with you to enable you to succeed.

- **respectful.** Please show respect for yourself, your peers, teachers and staff, and school property with your words and actions.
- **responsible.** How well you perform in our class is completely up to you. Follow directions, listen well, and work hard to the best of your ability. If you need my assistance outside of class time, please e-mail me.
- **honest.** Please complete all work honestly. If you don't create it, it is not yours to claim as your own. Another person's ideas in your writing must be cited; if you don't cite them, you are stealing another person's intellectual property. **All plagiarized work results in a zero for that assignment per pages 28-29 of the [PTHS Student Handbook](#).**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) use; I may sometimes permit you to use some version of AI on our assignments. When this is the case, you must indicate that you have, in fact, used it in your work. However, when I forbid its use, you **MUST** adhere to those guidelines. If I discover or highly suspect that you used unauthorized AI on an assignment, it will be considered cheating/plagiarism, and the same consequences listed above will be implemented.

If you utilize artificial intelligence (AI) in a dishonest manner (meaning, one in which I do not allow and/or one that is simply dishonest) that is classified as cheating and will also be handled as pages 28-29 of the [PTHS Student Handbook](#) dictate: You will receive a zero on the assignment with NO chance to make up the assignment and you will be dismissed from the National Honor Society.

I WILL NOT engage in a debate with you to "prove" to you why my sources and experienced professional judgment indicate that you dishonestly used AI; the burden of proof that you have NOT used unauthorized AI is on you.

Absences

You are responsible for any work you miss when you are absent. Try to stay current with your work when you are absent; however, if you cannot, you must make up your work upon your return. It is **your** responsibility to make up missed work; any work not completed will be entered as a "0" in PowerSchool. Check Google Classroom for current assignments. When you return, check our class folder in the hanging file box, then see me with any questions. Review my lesson plans, accessible under my name on the Penn-Trafford High School website, to see what you missed, and access any handouts I have made available on our Google Classroom page. Use [this form](#) for longer absence requests and follow school guidelines for secondary school visits ([PTHS Student Handbook](#) page 10).

The guidelines and procedures outlined above may change as circumstances necessitate. I will inform you of any changes. I look forward to having a great year with you!

Join codes/links:

Edpuzzle:

Period 1: <https://edpuzzle.com/join/upofhac/> Class code: upofhac

Period 5: <https://edpuzzle.com/join/wekmawi/> Class code: wekmawi

ParentSquare: <https://www.parentsquare.com/groups/join/a60hipamot>

CommonLit: Period 1: www.commonlit.org/enroll/ Class code: UJN8URSY

Period 5: www.commonlit.org/enroll/ Class code: 5RF7682M

“Start writing, no matter what. The water does not flow until the faucet is turned on.”

—*Louis L'Amour*

Please submit this completed signature page to me by Tuesday, August 28. Keep the previous guidelines in your binder for the rest of the school year.

I understand the rules, consequences, and procedures listed above. I agree to follow these rules and procedures as well as all information outlined in the [PTHS Student Handbook](#).

Student name (printed): _____

Student signature: _____

Date: _____

I/We understand the rules, consequences, and procedures listed above. Our child will follow these rules and procedures as well as all information outlined in the [PTHS Student Handbook](#).

Parent/Guardian name (printed): _____

Parent/Guardian signature: _____

Date: _____