

# Writing Project 3: A Theory of Writing

## Background and Overview

A “theory” is a system of explanation, a particular way of thinking that helps to explain phenomena in the world. As writers learn, work, and grow, many of us find it helpful to construct a “theory of writing”: a description of what we understand writing to be and how our own writing practices have worked in the past, currently work, and might work in the future.

For your third project—and as an important part of your final e-portfolio—you will have the opportunity to construct your own theory of writing as a way of helping you to chart, analyze, and enrich your own writing. This theory should be developed from your literacy practices throughout the course and beyond.

In this short essay, you will reflect on your development as a reader, writer, and critical thinker and explain how your learning has led you to a specific theory of writing. Your theory should be informed by your literacy practices and the learning outcomes of the course. It should also suggest how your prior experiences with writing will prepare you for successful engagement in future personal, academic, professional, and civic occasions for writing. Your reflection and theory of writing should be supported by concrete evidence (i.e. quotes, examples, screen shots, anecdotes, and/or other examples) from your own work and composing practices.

## Requirements and Deliverables

1. Your essay should include a thesis that makes a claim about what you understand the act of writing to be, and your essay should be organized in such a way that a reader can follow your thinking and reasoning from paragraph to paragraph and within each paragraph.
2. Your theory of writing should illustrate your current struggles, accomplishments, and abilities as a reader, writer, and critical thinker.
3. Your essay should relate your writing and your writing process to one bullet point of each of the four outcome areas of the [“WPA Outcomes Statement”](#) (i.e. “Rhetorical Knowledge,” “Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing,” etc.). Additionally, you should discuss how you used one of the Habits of Mind from the [“Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing”](#) to achieve one or more of the WPA Outcomes.
4. You should support your claims about writing with specific and concrete references to your own work (i.e. notes, process work, passages from your essays, project reflections, Writer’s Journals, feedback on your peer’s work, etc.). This support might take the form of quotes, screenshots, excerpts, narrated examples, peer reviews, anecdotes, etc.

5. Within your essay, you should not merely provide support; instead, you should explain what your support is support *for* and how that support works. In other words, as you offer evidence to your readers, make sure you explain what that evidence is meant to demonstrate or prove to them.

6. Your theory of writing should conclude by suggesting how your growth as a reader, writer, and critical thinker throughout first-year composition prepares you for future personal, academic, and professional writing and research projects.

7. You should include 2-3 multimodal elements such as photographs, hyperlinks to relevant materials, and so forth. You must make sure your reader understands why you are including these elements and why including them enriches your piece of writing. Since you will be making concrete references to your previous work, these multimodal elements could be the same multimodal elements that appeared in your other writing projects or assignments.

8. Your completed essay should have a title and be approximately 1700 words in length.

### **Project Submission**

- Rough Draft: Your rough draft will be submitted for peer review and to your e-portfolio.
- Revised Draft: Your revised draft should be uploaded to your e-portfolio.

### **Tips**

- Get started early.
- Review this week's materials and discussions, and pay close attention to the template materials.
- Set a writing/research schedule and stick to it.

Writing Project #3 – A Theory of Writing (Levels of Achievement)

**Writing Project #3: Theory of Writing Assessment Rubric**

1 = poor, 2 = fair, 3 = satisfactory, 4 = good, 5 = excellent

Criteria	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Organizes the essay with the reader in mind via a clear thesis statement and structured paragraphs. The thesis makes a claim about what the writer understands the act of writing to be. <b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes; Knowledge of Conventions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Illustrates the writer’s current struggles, accomplishments, and abilities as a reader, writer, and critical thinker. <b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Relates the writer’s writing and writing process to the four WPA Outcomes areas and discusses how the writer used one of the Habits of Mind to achieve at least one of the WPA Outcomes. <b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Supports claims about writing with specific and concrete references to the writer’s own work. <b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Concludes by suggesting how the writer’s growth as a reader, writer, and critical thinker throughout first-year composition prepares the writer for future writing and research projects. <b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Explains what support is support for and how that support works. <b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Meaningfully incorporates 2-3 multimodal elements. <b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Overall						

Writing Project #3 – A Theory of Writing (Levels of Achievement)

Criterion: Use of Organization	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
<p>Organizes the essay with the reader in mind via a clear thesis statement and structured paragraphs. The thesis makes a claim about what the writer understands the act of writing to be.</p> <p><b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes; Knowledge of Conventions</p>	□	□	□	□	□	

5: excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● includes a clear thesis statement that makes a claim about what the writer understands the act of writing to be</li> <li>● paragraphs always stay on topic and never change main ideas</li> <li>● the audience can follow the paper's organization with no difficulty</li> </ul>
4: good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● includes a mostly clear thesis statement that makes a claim about what the writer understands the act of writing to be</li> <li>● paragraphs almost always stay on topic and almost never change main ideas</li> <li>● the audience can follow the paper's organization with little difficulty</li> </ul>
3: satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● includes a somewhat ambiguous thesis statement that makes a claim about what the writer understands the act of writing to be</li> <li>● paragraphs sometimes stay on topic and sometimes change main ideas</li> <li>● the audience can follow the paper's organization with some difficulty</li> </ul>
2: fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● includes an ambiguous thesis statement that makes a claim about what the writer understands the act of writing to be</li> <li>● paragraphs rarely stay on topic and often change main ideas</li> <li>● the audience can follow the paper's organization with moderate difficulty</li> </ul>
1: needs significant work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● omits a thesis statement or includes a thesis statement that makes no claim about what the writer understands the act of writing to be</li> <li>● paragraphs do not stay on topic and very often change main ideas</li> <li>● the audience can follow the paper's organization with great difficulty</li> </ul>

Writing Project #3 – A Theory of Writing (Levels of Achievement)

Criterion: Use of Challenges and Struggles	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Illustrates the writer’s current struggles, accomplishments, and abilities as a reader, writer, and critical thinker. <b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5: excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>illustrates the writer’s current struggles, accomplishments, and abilities as a reader, writer, and critical thinker clearly to readers</li> </ul>
4: good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>illustrates the writer’s current struggles, accomplishments, and abilities as a reader, writer, and critical thinker in a manner that is mostly clear to readers</li> </ul>
3: satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>illustrates the writer’s current struggles, accomplishments, and abilities as a reader, writer, and critical thinker in a manner that is somewhat ambiguous to readers</li> </ul>
2: fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>illustrates the writer’s current struggles, accomplishments, and abilities as a reader, writer, and critical thinker in a manner that is ambiguous to readers</li> </ul>
1: needs significant work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not illustrate the writer’s current struggles, accomplishments, and abilities as a reader, writer, and critical thinker to readers</li> </ul>

Writing Project #3 – A Theory of Writing (Levels of Achievement)

Criterion: Use of WPA Outcomes and Habits of Mind	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Relates the writer’s writing and writing process to the four WPA Outcomes areas and discusses how the writer used one of the Habits of Mind to achieve at least one of the WPA Outcomes. <b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5: excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● relates the writer’s writing and writing process to all four of the WPA Outcomes areas</li> <li>● explains how the writer used one of the Habits of Mind to achieve at least one of the WPA Outcomes in a manner that is clear to the reader</li> </ul>
4: good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● relates the writer’s writing and writing process to three of the WPA Outcomes areas</li> <li>● explains how the writer used one of the Habits of Mind to achieve at least one of the WPA Outcomes in a manner that is mostly clear to the reader</li> </ul>
3: satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● relates the writer’s writing and writing process to two of the WPA Outcomes areas</li> <li>● explains how the writer used one of the Habits of Mind to achieve at least one of the WPA Outcomes in a manner that is somewhat ambiguous to the reader</li> </ul>
2: fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● relates the writer’s writing and writing process to one of the WPA Outcomes areas</li> <li>● explains how the writer used one of the Habits of Mind to achieve at least one of the WPA Outcomes in a manner that is ambiguous to the reader</li> </ul>
1: needs significant work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● does not relate the writer’s writing and writing process to the WPA Outcomes areas</li> <li>● does not explain how the writer used one of the Habits of Mind to achieve at least one of the WPA Outcomes</li> </ul>

Writing Project #3 – A Theory of Writing (Levels of Achievement)

Criterion: Use of Personal References and Support	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Supports claims about writing with specific and concrete references to the writer's own work. <b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5: excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>always supports claims about writing with specific and concrete references to the writer's own work</li> </ul>
4: good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>almost always supports claims about writing with specific and concrete references to the writer's own work</li> </ul>
3: satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sometimes supports claims about writing with specific and concrete references to the writer's own work</li> </ul>
2: fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rarely supports claims about writing with specific and concrete references to the writer's own work</li> </ul>
1: needs significant work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not support claims about writing with specific and concrete references to the writer's own work</li> </ul>

Writing Project #3 – A Theory of Writing (Levels of Achievement)

Criterion: Future Considerations as a Writer	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
<p>Concludes by suggesting how the writer’s growth as a reader, writer, and critical thinker throughout first-year composition prepares the writer for future writing and research projects.</p> <p><b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5: excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concludes by suggesting how the writer’s growth throughout first-year composition prepares the writer for future writing and research projects in a manner that is clear to readers</li> </ul>
4: good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concludes by suggesting how the writer’s growth throughout first-year composition prepares the writer for future writing and research projects in a manner that is mostly clear to readers</li> </ul>
3: satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concludes by suggesting how the writer’s growth throughout first-year composition prepares the writer for future writing and research projects in a manner that is somewhat ambiguous to readers</li> </ul>
2: fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concludes by suggesting how the writer’s growth throughout first-year composition prepares the writer for future writing and research projects in a manner that is ambiguous to readers</li> </ul>
1: needs significant work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not concludes by suggesting how the writer’s growth throughout first-year composition prepares the writer for future writing and research projects</li> </ul>

Criterion: Use of Support	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
<p>Explains what support is support for and how that support works.</p> <p><b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing; Processes</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5: excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>always explains both what support is support for and how that support works</li> </ul>
4: good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>almost always explains both what support is support for and how that support works</li> </ul>
3: satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sometimes explains both what support is support for and how that support works</li> </ul>
2: fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>rarely explains both what support is support for and how that support works</li> </ul>



Writing Project #3 – A Theory of Writing (Levels of Achievement)

1: needs significant work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>does not explain both what support is support for and how that support works</li> </ul>
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Criteria: Use of Organization	1	2	3	4	5	Comments
Meaningfully incorporates 2-3 multimodal elements. <b>Outcomes:</b> Rhetorical Knowledge; Processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5: excellent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incorporates 2-3 multimodal elements</li> <li>the multimodal elements strongly enrich the piece of writing</li> </ul>
4: good	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incorporates 2-3 multimodal elements</li> <li>the multimodal elements generally enrich the piece of writing</li> </ul>
3: satisfactory	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incorporates 2-3 multimodal elements</li> <li>the multimodal elements somewhat enrich the piece of writing</li> </ul>
2: fair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>incorporates 2-3 multimodal elements</li> <li>the multimodal elements barely enrich the piece of writing</li> </ul>
1: needs significant work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>there are no multimodal elements that enrich the piece of writing</li> </ul>