

TA Check-In



Zoom Meeting Information

- Zoom Meetings are about 60 minutes in length.
- Zoom Meetings are recorded.
- Recordings and PowerPoint presentations are posted on onQ (under "Activities" > "Zoom Meetings").
- Participate in the discussion by using the "Chat" window or by raising your hand in "Reactions."
- Your camera may be on or off.

ENGL 100 Zoom Meetings

	Informational	Writing Seminars	Live Chats
Fall 1-6	Intro to ENGL 100	Writing Seminar 1 (Crafting an Effective Thesis Statement)	Live Chat 1 (Short Fiction)
	Academic Integrity		
Fall 7-12	Fall Exam Information	Writing Seminar 2 (Structuring an Analytical Essay)	Live Chat 2 (Drama)
		TA Check-In	Live Chat 3 (Literary Non-Fiction)
Winter 1-6	Winter Exam Information	Writing Seminar 3 (Claim, Evidence, and Analysis)	Live Chat 4 (Poetry)
		Writing Seminar 4 (Some Notes on Grammar and Style)	

ENGL 200 Zoom Meetings

	Informational	Writing Seminars	Live Chats
Fall 1-6	Intro to ENGL 200	Writing Seminar 1 (Crafting an Effective Thesis Statement)	Live Chat 1 (16thC/Sonnet)
	Academic Integrity		
Fall 7-12	Fall Exam Information	Writing Seminar 2 (Structuring an Analytical Essay)	Live Chat 2 (18thC/Satire)
Winter 1-6	TA Check-In	Writing Seminar 3 (Claim, Evidence, and Analysis)	Live Chat 3 (19thC/Romanticism)
Winter 7-12	Winter Exam Information	Writing Seminar 4 (Some Notes on Grammar and Style)	Live Chat 4 (20thC/Modernism)

ENGL 100 TA Group 1 Kaitlyn Fralick

Common strength: Incorporation of evidence

- Some students memorized and incorporated relevant quotations
- Others did an excellent job of referring to specific scenes or details, still showing knowledge of the play
- Evidence was often relevant and purposeful, clearly supporting the essay's argument
- Within each analytical paragraph, evidence was usually explicitly connected to the analysis
- For future essays, continue using specific, textual evidence to support each claim; then, ensure the link between evidence and analysis is clear to your reader

ENGL 100 TA Group 1

Kaitlyn Fralick

Common area for improvement: Ensure the essay's thesis statement is argumentative

- **Argumentation:** Essay introductions did not have an argumentative thesis statement, resulting in an essay that was observational and exploratory
- **Organization:** Essay introductions did not have an argumentative thesis statement, but an argument started to develop later in the essay

ENGL 100 TA Group 1

Kaitlyn Fralick

Tips for future essays

- Review Writing Seminar 2 (particularly the “So What?” and Counterargument Tests)
- Outline your argument before you begin writing to ensure your argument doesn’t “find” itself along the way
- Use precise language (e.g., replace vague words like “theme” with the specific theme that is revealed)
- Think about your reader! A well-structured essay with a clearly identifiable thesis statement helps your reader follow your argument

Bonus tip: Utilize the terminology we have learned throughout the course (e.g., if we are writing an essay about *conflict*, how might the terminology discussed in Unit 2.4 (*external, internal, ostensible, actual*) help us shape and strengthen our argument?)

ENGL 100 TA Group 2

Ainsley Gerald



- Avoid making general statements and vague remarks that cannot be backed up by evidence (e.g., “Since the beginning of time” (too vague) or “Shakespeare is a very well-known playwright” (too general or obvious))
- Make sure you are arguing a specific point about the text, not just reiterating what has happened; avoid long sentences of plot summary
- Don’t bite off more than you can chew: for a short essay thesis, it’s okay to focus on one point you can argue well and in-depth, rather than several that you can only argue part way

ENGL 100 TA Group 2

Ainsley Gerald

- Make use of quotations from the text as primary evidence, and be sure to cite them correctly (both in-text and in Works Cited)
- Avoid using personal experience or opinion in a non-personal essay (i.e., if you are writing on a Shakespearean play, there is no need for personal narration unless prompted)
- Steer clear of repetition throughout your essay to avoid redundancy; close off your paragraph or essay with a statement about why your point matters rather than with just a summary of the entire paper

ENGL 100 TA Group 3
Elizabeth Grice**Thesis Statements and Theme**

- The best thesis statements address something formal and something thematic
 - **Something formal:** an Element of Literature
 - **Something thematic:** an idea about the world that the text suggests, illustrates, etc.
- Both the “So What?” Test and the Counterargument Test require a thesis to have a strong thematic component

ENGL 100 TA Group 3
Elizabeth Grice**Thesis Statements and Theme**

- Remember that topic and theme are not the same thing (see Headrick 27)
- It isn’t enough to say that a text “explores social class,” or even that it “addresses problems surrounding social class”: what exactly does the text say about social class?
- Incorporating a theme into your thesis helps to set up an essay for success

ENGL 100 TA Group 4
Nikolai Rodrigues**Insufficiently Argumentative Thesis Statements**

- The thesis is the single most important sentence in an essay, and a weak thesis statement tends to result in a weak essay overall
- Avoid thesis statements that present a statement of fact, an observation, or a description
- Remember to apply to “So What?” Test and the Counterargument Test
- Consider asking questions such as, “What might this suggest or indicate?” or “Why might this be significant?”

ENGL 100 TA Group 4
Nikolai Rodrigues**Claims Should Be Argumentative Rather than Observational or Descriptive**

- As the thesis is the single most importance sentence in an essay, the claim is the single most important sentence in each analytical paragraph
- Observational claims tend to result in summary rather than analysis
- Think of each claim as a “mini-thesis” for the paragraph to prove
- Consider how applying the “So What?” Test and the Counterargument Test to claims can help to push them towards stronger argumentation

ENGL 100 TA Group 4

Nikolai Rodrigues

Avoid Plot Summary in Analytical Paragraphs

- The standard assumption is that the reader of the essay is already familiar with the text
- Plot summary tends to result from insufficiently argumentative claims and thesis statements
- Space or time spent summarizing should instead be spent engaging in analysis
- Narrow focus to analyze specific pieces of evidence

ENGL 200 TA Group 1

Jessica Caravaggio

- To generate a clear and specific thesis, identify a central topic within the text that you wish to address, and then determine what idea the text communicates to the reader about this topic; finally, identify in what formal ways the text communicates this idea to the reader
- To avoid structural or organizational errors within analytical paragraphs, work from an essay outline; this outline should include sections for a claim, evidence from the text, and analysis (close-reading) of that evidence for each analytical paragraph

ENGL 200 TA Group 1

Jessica Caravaggio

- To improve introductions and conclusions, consider more carefully the opening and closing statements of your essay:
 - An “attention-getting” opening remark should frame the central argument in an interesting way and draw interest towards the topic at hand without relying on generalizations
 - A closing statement might suggest new research possibilities or connections
- To improve the quality of your writing, try reading your work out loud when editing, studying the course writing manual, reading more published prose in your spare time, and researching common writing errors (e.g., passive voice, comma splices, vague pronoun references, run-on sentences, etc.)

For More Information

The Purdue Online Writing Lab
<https://owl.purdue.edu/>

- General Writing
 - The Writing Process
 - Academic Writing
 - Mechanics, Grammar, Punctuation
- Research and Citation
 - MLA Style
- Avoiding Plagiarism
- Subject-Specific Writing
 - Writing in Literature

Dr May's Class Web Site
<https://www.queensu.ca/academia/drrobertgmay/docs/>

- “Essay Writing Notes”
- “Avoiding Plagiarism”
- “AI Drawbacks”
- “Grammar and Style Notes”
- “Integrating Quotations”

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