

# A Student's Guide to English 1A

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# General Course Information

## Time and Place

- This class is online and takes place on Canvas.

## Teacher Information

- Name: Lori Levine
- Email: [lori.levine@reedleycollege.edu](mailto:lori.levine@reedleycollege.edu)
- Canvas Messaging System:  You can send me a message through Canvas. The link to the inbox is on the left side of the Canvas page or on the bottom toolbar of the Canvas app.
- Phone: 559-549-3399—You can text me at this number. Texting often gets a faster response than a phone call.
- Office: CCI 216

**Note:** Overall, I am good at returning messages. If you do not hear back from me within 24 hours, contact me again because I missed your message or something happened, and I forgot to reply.

## Welcome!

Welcome to English 1A. English 1A is meant to help you become a better academic reader and writer. However, for this class and me to assist you on this adventure, you need to be an active participant. This course is not just about the information I give you but how you interact with the information and engage in the class. Basically, you need to take time every week to do the work in order to pass the class.

You also need to remember that this is a writing class and in order to become a better writer, you must practice a lot! To do that, you will have different writing experiences. Some of these experiences will be in the form of discussion boards, others will be in the form of free writes, and others will be in the form of more formulaic essays. All of this must be your work and not the work of someone else or Artificial Intelligence (AI). I will talk about that later.

Writing can sometimes be tough and even ego-crushing. How many of you have gotten an essay back and have been upset by the grade you received? I know I have. Once, I actually burned a paper (well tried to burn it in my sink, but it didn't really work) because I was so upset. I know that's really extreme, but hey, we all do stupid things sometimes.

However, I must admit that I was probably more upset with myself as I waited until the last minute to complete the assignment. I was confused by what I needed to do which is one reason why I procrastinated, and I didn't get help. I was embarrassed. Don't ever be embarrassed about getting help.

## If you want to pass the class, here are some tips:

- See me often (in person or on zoom) to get help with your papers. You might feel nervous or be upset, but still see me.
- Meet with a tutor weekly. We have four tutors who I work with specifically.
- You can also get help from NetTutor which is on our Canvas page. This is another free tutoring service. I have to admit that I have not played with it yet, but some teachers say that it helps students. Make sure you always provide them or your tutor with the assignment directions.
- **Log into Canvas daily and look at your emails, the announcements, and the modules.** Specifically, log in on Mondays when I will release the new weekly module.
- Go through the modules and engage with the videos and other work I post. Some students skip all of this and then when they do the assignment they are confused.
- Do your homework on time. See my late homework policy below.

- Take your work seriously. Some students turn in work that doesn't make sense just to turn in something. You won't get credit for that.
- Take responsibility for your actions OR lack of actions. If you messed up, you messed up. Be responsible. Get help from me.
- Do not plagiarize or cheat. Do not use ChatGPT or other AI tools unless I tell you that you can. More on this below. Over the last year, I've had a few students use ChatGPT and I can tell.
- **Have a positive attitude.** Even if you aren't getting an A from the beginning, having a positive attitude will help you succeed and have a growth mindset (you will learn about this in our first unit.)

Please, please, please do not come to me at the end of the semester saying that you MUST pass the class to get financial aid or for any other reason. I won't be able to help you.

If you wait until the last week of school or the weekend before finals to get feedback, I won't be able to give you the feedback you need.

**Remember, I do not give you a grade, you earn your grade.**

## Office Hours:

Office hours are a time when I can talk to you about anything! If you need help with an essay, an assignment, or your grade, come and see me. Don't worry about bothering me; you are not. These hours are specifically for students!

My office is at Reedley College in Room CCI 216.

- 9 to 9:50 am in CCI 216 on Tuesdays and Thursdays. I can also zoom with you these days, but you need to let me know you want to zoom.
- 9-9:50 am ON ZOOM on Wednesdays—here is the link: <https://scccd.zoom.us/j/7681779517>
- I am always happy to meet with you at other times either in person if I'm on campus or on Zoom if I'm not on campus.

## Course Description for English 1A

This is a reading and writing class. During the class, you will read, analyze, and compose college-level prose, with emphasis on the **expository**. You will study writing as a process and explore different composing structures and strategies. You will revise your own writing and conduct research (gather, organize, evaluate, integrate, and document information), culminating in a term research paper and annotated bibliography. You will write a minimum of 5,000 words in formal academic language. (See the end of the syllabus for Course Objectives and Outcomes).

**The expository essay** is a genre of writing where students explore an idea, assess evidence, and present a coherent argument in a clear and concise manner. This can be achieved through methods like comparison, definition, examples, or cause and effect analysis.

## Attendance

- You must participate in all aspects of this class which means completing assigned work on time. You completing work is how I take "attendance."
- If you do not complete Week 1 work by Saturday, Jan. 13, you will be dropped.
- If you don't post to the discussion board or complete class assignments for 10 days in a row (including weekends) that means you are not participating in class and you run the risk of being dropped. If you decide that you no longer wish to participate in the class, then you are responsible for dropping yourself!
- I do understand that sometimes "life" happens and gets in the way of school. If something does come up,

then you should contact me right away.

- Because stuff happens, I drop a certain number of homework assignments at the end of the semester.

## Workload Expectations

Students often think that taking an online class will be easier than a face-to-face class. I suppose that some online courses are easier than their face-to-face counterpart. This, however, is an English class and will require a significant amount of time and effort. Please remember that a face-to-face English 1A class meets for **almost 3 hours and 40 minutes a week**. On top of that, **for every unit you take, you are expected to do 2 hours of outside homework. This is a 4 unit class**. You can do the math (but if you can't, that's between 8 to 12 hours a week).

Honestly, students who succeed in this class do the work and get help.

## What You Will Need for This Class

### Technology

- You need a decent computer. I prefer a PC but Apple computers are also okay. Chromebooks often cause challenges.

### Required Text—Get this right away

- *Warriors Don't Cry* by Melba Pattillo Beals. We are reading the abridged version. It is 226 pages long. **DO NOT RENT THE BOOK.**
  - Here is the ISBN Number: **978-1416948827**
  - Buy it on Amazon [Here](#).
  - You can also buy it in our bookstore.

**Deadline for getting book is Monday, Jan. 15. You will post a picture of you holding your book.**

## Grading for English 1A-- Grading Contract

Research indicates that grades often undermine student learning and motivation, so in this class, I will not be using letter grades to assess your work, including your essays. Instead, we will have what is called a "grading contract" that spells out what you need to do to earn an A, B, or C for the semester. At the end of the semester, I still have to give you a final grade.

To earn a particular letter grade, you must meet all of the criteria for that grade. If you want an A, you will need to achieve all of the criteria for an A. If you want a B, you will need to achieve all of the criteria for B. **If you meet the essay criteria but not the homework criteria, you will drop to a lower grade level.** For instance, if you get 4 passes on your essays (see below) but don't do 80% of the homework, you will get a C.

Because I am using a grading contract, you will have to partially keep track of how you are doing, specifically on your essays. **Canvas does not allow me to give high passes, passes, etc. I can only track your homework grade.** I have included a grading tracker at the end of the syllabus for you to keep track of your essay grades.

### A Grade

- Complete and submit all essays
- Earn at least 2 "High Passes" and 3 "Passes" on the essays
- Earn "Completes" on at least 90% of the homework

### B Grade

- Complete and submit all essays
- Earn at least 4 "Passes" on the essays
- Earn "Completes" on at least 80% of the homework

## C Grade

- Complete and submit at least 4 essays including Essay 2, 3, and 4.
- Earn at least 3 “Passes” **One of these passes must be on Essay 3 or 4** as both include research. **Another pass must be on Essay 2 on our book “Warriors Don’t Cry.”**
- Earn “Completes” on at least 70% of the homework
- **Note: If you do not earn at least a C, the class will not count for your transfer English composition credit. You will need to repeat the class.**

## D Grade

- Complete and submit at least 2 essays
- Earn at least 2 “Passes”
- Earn “Completes” on **at least** 60% of the homework
- **If you earn a D or F, you will have to retake this class.**

## F Grade

- Don’t do the work or get only 1 “Pass” on an essay.

## Required Coursework

### Essays:

- You will write 5 essays this semester (this includes the Final in the class which is a timed reflection). Essays will be graded on the following scale:

**High Pass**

**Pass**

**Needs Work**

**Not attempted**

There will be a rubric for each essay. I will go over this more before the first essay is due.

### Homework:

- Every week, you will usually be asked to read from our class texts (including articles I give you), watch videos on Canvas, and engage with the ideas/information in an active way, such as posting on a Canvas discussion board. When you do not have reading assignments or videos to watch, you will be working on writing and revising drafts of your papers.
  - **Homework will be graded complete/incomplete which also might take the form of 1 point or 0 points.** I must do this to see what percentage of work you have done for your homework. Again, I cannot track your essay marks on Canvas. I keep a separate excel spread sheet for that. I can, though, track your homework grades on Canvas. Even though this might not seem like a lot of points, you still need to do the work. In my vast teaching experiences, I have found that typically, students who do the work, pass because each assignment leads to the next which leads to the essays. Occasionally, you will not be able to do the next assignment if you have not completed a previous assignment.
  - When I say, “do the work,” I mean with effort. Some students turn in work that doesn’t make sense or address the prompt. If that is the case, I will usually, although not always, let you redo the homework assignment.
  - My goal is for you to pass the class. Students who don’t do the homework, don’t usually pass the class.

## Other Activities

### Conferences

Throughout the semester, I occasionally hold mandatory conferences during which we will talk about your essay.

These will be conducted through zoom or you can come to my office if I am on campus.

## Sharing Work

Sometimes I take part of your work and share it. This will be done anonymously, and I usually never take more than two paragraphs. I will not include any material that seems private. Sometimes, I will have you critique each other's work. Sharing work is a great way to learn, so don't worry about these activities.

## Course Schedule for English 1A

You will notice that I do not have a course schedule laid out with everything we are doing this semester.

I do not do this because as the class progresses, my "planned schedules" always change based on how students are doing and what help you need. That said, here is a general plan for when essays will be due. This might change slightly during the semester.

**Essay 1:** A personal essay written during Weeks 2 and 3.

**Essay 2:** "Warriors Don't Cry," essay written during Weeks 7 and 8.

**Essay 3:** Essay on banned books, developed Week 9 to Week 12. This is a mini-research paper.

**Essay 4:** Research paper dealing with Bias in Education. We will start this around Week 12/ Week 13 and continue through the end of the semester with submission in Week 17.

**Essay 5:** Timed essay during finals week wrapping up the semester and reflecting on what you have learned.

## Late Work Policy

### Homework

I know sometimes that life happens and it is easy to fall behind and get overwhelmed. Because of that, my policy is intended to help you stay on track and be successful. **As a rule, I do not accept late homework; however, If something happens to you, please contact me ASAP and PERHAPS we can work out an alternative deadline for work due that week.**

### Essays

These essays are the meat of our class, so if you are going to be late on an essay, please contact me ASAP so that we can make alternative arrangements. Because this is an online class, timed essay assignments will be posted for several days. Other essays will be broken down into tasks to help you complete them.

## Feedback

I like to give feedback on assignments, especially those that lead to the final essay. For these assignments, you will not get a "complete" until you respond back. I will indicate that on the assignment. You might also be locked out from moving forward. Again, I will indicate that on the assignment.

## Academic Honesty Policy

There are two main components to my academic honesty policy:

1. **All writing you submit must be your own (not by AI--Artificial Intelligence--software or essay-for-hire service).** In other words, you cannot use ChatGPT or some other AI technology unless I tell you that you can. Using it when I ask you to use your own brain is cheating. Occasionally, I will have assignments

where I allow you to use this technology, but you can only use it in the way I prescribe.

My goal for this class is for you to grow as writers and critical thinkers. That can only happen if you are using your own brain and writing your own papers. If I determine that an essay was not written by you, it will not receive a passing grade, and you will need to re-submit new work of your own.

2. Whenever you include information, ideas, or quotes from another source in your own work, you need to properly quote and cite your sources in MLA (Modern Language Association) format. We will go over how to do this so that you do not commit plagiarism (presenting someone else's work as your own).

## **More on Plagiarism and Using Artificial intelligence like ChatGPT:**

Every semester one or more students plagiarize. Now, students are using AI. Sometimes students plagiarize by mistake, or they do it on purpose because they do not feel they are prepared. Whatever the case may be, we will have a conversation about this. You might also get reported to our Behavioral Intervention Team and the Dean of Humanities as well as receive a 0 on an assignment. Depending on the situation, you will be asked to redo the assignment.

Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating: the use of another's words or ideas without identifying them as such or giving credit to the source. Plagiarism may include, but is not limited to,

- failing to provide complete citations and references for all work that draws on the ideas, words, or work of others,
- failing to identify the contributors to work done in collaboration,
- submitting duplicate work to be evaluated in different courses without the knowledge and consent of the instructors involved,
- or failing to observe computer security systems and software copyrights.
- Copying someone else's Discussion Board counts as plagiarism.
- Copying someone else's essay or parts of his/her essay is also plagiarism.
- Copying ideas from an article is plagiarism.
- Using ChatGPT or other AI, is a kind of cheating and follows the same rules as plagiarism. I occasionally use AI detectors. Sometimes these don't work, but there are other ways to tell if a student uses AI. If I suspect you of using AI, I will send a notice to my dean and you will need to meet with him. More and more, students are using AI because they are confused and don't get help. We all make mistakes, so fess up, get help, and learn.

## **Disruptive Behavior**

Although this is an online class, if you are rude to another student or me, I will fill out a disruptive student report. If the behavior becomes too disruptive, disciplinary steps will be taken, as per Board Policy 5550, "including but not limited to the removal, suspension or expulsion of a student."

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a verified need for an academic accommodation or materials in alternate media (i.e. Braille, large print, electronic text, etc.) per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, please contact me as soon as possible. I will work with the DSPS (Disabled Students Programs and Services) office to make sure that you get the help that you require. **In order to get accommodations, you must sign up with DSPS.**

# Student Learning Outcomes and the Skills You Need to Master

The goal of the course is to master the skills below. It is often the case where students will get a pass or high pass in some of the skills below, but not all. After I fill out a rubric, I look at the rubric holistically. You might do well and get a pass on the introduction, thesis, conclusion, and grammar, but still need work on topic sentences and the body paragraphs. As the body paragraphs are the meat of the essay, I will have you redo them and make a few changes in other areas of the essay. In the comments, you will get a “NEEDS WORK” on the essay to indicate that you need to redo it. There is no shame in this. Often, students need to revise an essay. This is how you learn! I know this might frustrate you, especially if you always did well in English classes. You are, however, in college, and it’s my job to push you to become a better writer.

## **SLO 1: ACADEMIC WRITING and READING:**

Write a documented, well-organized research paper of at least 1,500 words that demonstrates critical thinking and command of the English language. **YOU MUST PASS ESSAY 3 OR 4 TO SHOW THIS.**

## **SLO 3 SUMMARIZE AND COMPREHEND COLLEGE-LEVEL PROSE (WILL INCLUDE A FULL READING).**

**YOU MUST PASS ESSAY 2 TO SHOW THIS.**

These are the skills the show that you have met SLO 1 and SLO 2. You must show this on various essays.

### Skill 1.1--Introduction Paragraph

#### **Criteria for a High Pass:**

- Uses critical thinking and creativity to introduce the topic in a meaningful way that provides context for the thesis and leads up to the thesis well.
- This can be done in several ways. The introduction can give:
  - background information
  - an interesting story
  - a description of something
  - facts or statistics (make sure you cite any statistics)
  - the opposing viewpoint
  - a definition.

### Skill 1.2—Thesis

#### **Criteria for a High Pass:**

- Arguable thesis statement, which includes a fresh and original angle on the topic.
- The thesis comes at the end of the introduction.
- It gives a topic and an opinion that will be proved in the essay.
- Each body paragraph relates to the thesis and that relationship is obvious.
- The reader does not have to guess at what the essay will be about or how each paragraph relates to the thesis.

### Skill 1.3—Topic Sentences

#### **Criteria for a High Pass:**

- Topic sentences support the thesis and clearly establish the paragraph’s purpose. You are using clear and precise language that is not formulaic; each topic sentence is unique. They don’t all sound the same.
- The topic sentences contain transitions to connect the ideas between each paragraph.

### Skill 1.4—BODY PARAGRAPHS—EVIDENCE, ANALYSIS, AND SYNTHESIS (This Is Where You Will Find an Assessment for SLO 3)

#### **Criteria for High Pass:**



- Body paragraphs prove the topic sentences and the thesis statement. Body paragraphs should:
- Use quality sources that are accurate, reliable, and appropriate.
- Include sufficient evidence to prove the point in that paragraph.
- have appropriate context for evidence.
- Include summaries or paraphrases which contain essential details that are accurate representations of the source(s). The student shows an understanding of the text(s); this includes being able to interpret the text(s), draw conclusions, synthesize information logically, make connections, understand key vocabulary, etc. (SLO 3)
- Adequately introduce sources. Quoted or summarized material starts with the author's name, credentials (the first time you use the source), the name of the article (the first time you use the source), and a suitable signal verb: argues, asserts, or claims. In other words, you are following MLA format. (SLO 3)
- Have a logical progression of ideas both within the paragraphs and between the paragraphs.
- There is no repetition.
- Have strong analysis. This is the “so what” of the paper. You are explaining why the evidence is important.
- Be free from plagiarism or AI uses.

### Skill 1.5—Conclusion

#### Criteria for a High Pass:

- The author does NOT restate the main idea of each body paragraph.
- The writer completes the essay’s ideas in a meaningful way, leaving the reader something to think about. This can be done by:
  - Giving solutions to problems.
  - Speculate further about the thesis suggesting reasonable action, etc.
  - Connect back to the introduction.
  - Look to the future—Apply new information to their lives to see things more globally.

### Skill 1.6—Overall Sentence Structure/Grammar

#### Criteria for a High Pass:

- The writer demonstrates command of Academic English.
- There are few sentence-level errors—including few run-on or fragmented sentences.
- There is also proper capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- Overall, the essay is well-edited and the word choice shows an awareness of the audience.

### Skill 1.7— Overall MLA Format of Document and Correctly Formatted Works Cited Page If Sources Are Used.

#### Criteria for a High Pass:

#### MLA FORMAT

- Essays must be typed in Times New Roman font size 12 with no bold, capitalized, or italicized fonts.
- Essays must be double-spaced throughout.
- Before and after spacing must be set to zero.
- Margins should be 1” on all sides of the paper and justified on the left.
- On the top left-hand side of the paper, you should include (in this order):
  - Your name
  - The class and the teacher’s name
  - The Essay Number (ie: Essay 1 or Essay 1 Revision 2)
  - Submission date
- After the class information, put your title, centered, on the next line. Make sure you don’t make the title a bigger font than the rest of the paper; don’t put the title in quotes, bolded or italicized

font.

- Give your title a creative name (not the name of the assignment or the name of the major reading).
- All pages (including the first) are numbered with the number in the upper-right corner, one half-inch from the top—use the auto-insert function. The page number is preceded by your last name. This information needs to be formatted in the header.

#### **WORKS CITED FORMAT**

- Work Cited is a new page (hard page or page break created)
- Line spacing is correct
- Sources are listed alphabetically
- Hanging indent used for second and any subsequent lines for sources that take up more than one line
- Quotation marks and italics are used appropriately.
- Titles of articles are surrounded with quotation marks
- Titles of books and journals are italicized
- **NOTE: For Skill 1.7** you either do both correctly and get a HIGH PASS or you make mistakes and get a NEEDS WORK. You can continue to submit until it is correct.

#### **Skill 1.8: Follows Instructions/Requirements**

**NOTE: For** this skill, you either get a Yes or a No. You do not get points for it. If you get a NO, then you must redo the paper. We will talk.

#### **SLO 2: COMPLETE A TIMED ESSAY INDEPENDENTLY IN CLASS.**

- **Skill 2.1**—Write a basic introduction in a timed environment.
- **Skill 2.2**—Writes a thesis in a timed environment.
- **Skill 2.3**—Writes topic sentences in a timed environment.
- **Skill 2.4**—Writes multiple body paragraphs in a timed environment.
- **Skill 2.5**—Writes a conclusion in a timed environment.
- **Skill 2.6**—The essay has been properly edited in a timed environment.
- **Skill 2.7**— Essay includes a correctly formatted Works Cited (if sources are used)

## **IMPORTANT DATES FOR SPRING 2024**

<b>DATE</b>	<b>DAY</b>	<b>EVENT / DEADLINE</b>
January 8	(M)	Start of Spring 2024 semester
January 8 - March 8	(M-F)	Short-term Spring 2024 classes, first nine weeks
January 15	(M)	Martin Luther King, Jr. Day observed (no classes held, campus closed)
January 19	(F)	Last day to drop a Spring 2024 full-term class for full refund
January 26	(F)	Last day to register for a Spring 2024 full-term class in person with add authorization
January 26	(F)	Last day to drop a Spring 2024 full-term class to avoid a “W” in person

January 28	(Su)	Last day to drop a Spring 2024 full-term class to avoid a "W" on Self-Service
January 28	(Su)	Last day to add a Spring 2024 full-term class with add authorization on Self-Service
February 16	(F)	Lincoln Day observance (no classes held, campus closed)
February 19	(M)	Washington Day observance (no classes held, campus closed)
March 1	(F)	Deadline to apply for graduation for Spring 2024 completion
March 8	(F)	Last Day to drop a Spring 2024 full-term class (letter grades assigned after this date)
March 11 - May 17	(M-F)	Short-term Spring 2024 classes, second nine weeks
March 25 - March 29	(M-F)	Spring recess (no classes held, campus open Mar 25-28)
March 29	(F)	Good Friday observance (no classes held, campus closed) (classes reconvene Apr 1)
May 13-17	(M-F)	Spring 2024 final exams week
May 17	(F)	Last day to change a Spring 2024 class to/from Pass/No-Pass grading basis
May 17	(F)	End of Spring 2024 semester/commencement

## Grade Tracker

**Essays Status:** High Pass Pass...Needs Work...Not Attempted

Essay	Essay Status
Essay 1	
Essay 2	
Essay 3	
Essay 4	
Essay 5	