

WHAT IS COMPOSITION?

Put simply, composition refers to the act of writing or creating documents. As writing is a pivotal skill in a college education, composition courses are often required by universities around the globe. Additionally, composition is an academic discipline oftentimes associated with writing departments, writing programs, and writing courses at the university level. Typically, in K-12, writing courses are equated with English/Language Arts.

Because of the influence of communication studies, multimodality, and the art of rhetoric, the definition of composition has expanded to include multimodal composition (the creation of multimodal documents).

THE AIMS OF COMPOSITION

College Composition is often concerned with six conventions or principles, which make use of heavily governed grammatical nuances, patterns of proper English usage, and considerable rhetorical techniques.

We call these conventions or principles, the six C's of composition. And, they are:

1. Clarity
2. Coherence
3. Concision
4. Consistency
5. Creativity
6. Connection

Clarity is concerned with every message being clear to the audience; that is, there are few errors on the surface which hinder the message or slow the reader. Additionally, the message is clearly understood.

Coherence refers to the idea that everything within the message makes sense, is logical, and is sane.

Concision refers to the idea that your message is mostly brief, not wordy or fluffy. In other words, you say what you need to say... no more than necessary.

Consistency refers to the consistent use of similar structures (such as the different forms of parallelism), rhythmic nuances, and the organization of the ideas within the message. In other words, things need to have a good rhythmic flow (not choppy), and

must have a definite organization. Additionally, consistency refers to using things like formatting correctly and which are consistent with any source documentation guidelines.

Creativity refers to the notion that your message is unique and not plagiarized. In other words, although you are confined to a few notions in terms of maintaining clarity and the other conventions discussed here, you create a distinctive document. Do not make your document into something more poetic or crafty, especially if you are writing something referential, expository, argumentative, or even professional. If you need your writing to be understood, then keep in mind that it should not obscure the message.

Connection refers to the idea that the composer creates a document, which connects to the reader (what we call, "The Audience"). In college composition, audience is one of the most important considerations. After all, you are not typically composing texts for yourself. You are composing documents for a specific audience (e.g., your professor, your family, your employer, your employees, etc.). Things to consider are often simple concepts such as topic/subject matter, personal anecdotes, analogies, references, and point of view. Learning does not take place without connection; likewise, persuasion does not take place without connection. Thus, connection is one of the most important facets of composing well.