

## How visits to the writing center can help your writing

---

Writing centers exist for one main reason: to help you become a better writer. Taking advantage of your writing center's services is one of the best things you can do to help improve your writing. If you are feeling uncertain about how the writing center can help you, this handout will answer some of your questions.

**What happens at the writing center?** Writing centers offer you time with a tutor to work intensively on your writing, giving you the opportunity to ask questions, request clarification, practice new skills, get instant feedback, and discuss any writing skills you want to improve. In addition to face-to-face sessions, many writing centers offer online tutoring, which may be synchronous (working online with a tutor in real time, as in an online chat) or asynchronous (e-mailing your draft to a tutor and receiving a single response).

Some writing centers employ undergraduate students as tutors; at other centers, tutors may be graduate students, faculty members, or professional tutors. Whatever their background, tutors are trained to help you with your writing concerns. You can visit the writing center for help with any type of writing assignment and at any stage of your writing process.

**What do writing tutors do?** Although you may be anxious to improve a single piece of writing, tutors are just as concerned with your long-term success as a writer. They are sympathetic fellow writers who will read your work, offer observations and suggestions, help you learn to recognize your own road blocks in writing, and help you to better solve your own problems when there isn't a tutor present.

Remember, however, that tutors are in a sort of halfway position between your classmates and your instructors. They are not there to give you a grade or to offer opinions about a grade you may have received. And, although you can expect them to be sympathetic, they can't negotiate problems between you and your professors.

**How can writing tutors help?** If you are in the early stages of writing a paper, tutors can offer you insight into which parts of your paper are most effective and which areas need more work. They can't write the paper for you, but they can help you to strengthen it and to learn strategies for improving your writing.

If you have a revised draft, a tutor won't proofread your paper and correct it for you; rather, he or she will help you find errors so that you can correct them on your own and will help you understand what kinds of errors you make most often. As you learn to focus specifically on those kinds of errors, you'll be better able to check your work without having to remember every rule of grammar at any given moment.

Writing tutors care about you and your writing, and, if you're willing to work hard and be patient, they can help you to make noticeable, lasting progress.