

INKWELL



THE EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE WRITING CENTER
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WELCOME TO OUR NECK OF THE WOODS: LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY AND THE WRITING CENTER

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“Our Neck of the Woods” is an idiom implying “my local community” or “the area in which we live.” Whether you’re visiting our fair campus for a quarter or a year on exchange, you decided to attend Evergreen all four years from your native country, or you grew up in a multi-lingual household, this article and poem are a letter to you. I want to welcome you and all the beautiful language you know. I’m inviting you to talk.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU COME IN FOR AN APPOINTMENT?

When you bring in a paper to get tutored, you’ll meet with one of our tutors. Each one of them is ready to have a discussion with you on your work. They understand the unique talents of every writer, and appreciate the language diversity you bring. Usually, your tutor will discuss what kind of writing you are doing, where you are in the writing process, and then read it aloud. It may seem scary to have a stranger read your paper, especially if you’re uncomfortable with your English, but no worries—your tutor can quickly become your friend!

One way to become comfortable with tutoring is to visit the Writing Center regularly and meet with the same tutor. This allows a tutor to become familiar with your work, and as you two meet, you’ll soon find that the conversations get easier and easier. Not only will you be practicing English in your sessions, you’ll be identifying any common grammatical errors in your writing, getting accustomed to American Academic Standard English composition, and learning the ins and outs of Evergreen writing assignments.

ENGLISH COMPOSITION AT EVERGREEN

Something to keep in mind, especially if you are an exchange student, is that every culture in the world has a different preference for writing style. American Academic composition is known for its adherence to the thesis-driven essay. American college students are expected to write in this form

for most of their education and have long practiced this way of writing, usually since grade school. If you plan on writing for an English-speaking audience, it may be helpful for you to get comfortable with this form. In saying all of this, I must also introduce you to the fact that we are at Evergreen, where the regular way of doing things is often changeable. Evergreen is much less known for its strict style than its allowing students to be creative and new in the ways they do anything, but not least of all, writing.

A NOTE ON FACULTY

Each teacher you meet will have different ideas of the writing process and different expectations of writing. Communicating with faculty about your language abilities and goals can be very beneficial.

EVERGREEN WRITING

Evaluations: Evaluations are page-long assessments of your own work in a class, and they replace letter grades. You also can evaluate the faculty, the course, and your entire Evergreen experience.

Journaling: Faculty may ask you to write personal responses to texts as you read them, and turn them in at various points in the quarter.

Integrative/Synthesis Essay: Taking ideas and concepts learned throughout the class and connecting them together.

Reflective Essay: This essay can take many shapes, but is most often assigned for the end of the class to look back on the material you've learned.

Autobiographical Writing: Writing about yourself, possibly with themes (ex: "My History with Nature," "My Biggest Influences").

Research Papers: Writing these will involve gathering information from many sources and then citing them, creating your own thesis and arguments.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Prime Time Tutoring: Located on the 2nd floor of A dorm

Primetime is an extension of the Writing Center, and is conveniently located in the "A" dorm. If you live on campus, this is a great place to go in the evening if you're looking for more tutoring opportunities. This location has four internet-connected computers and plenty of space to work

on papers. If the tutors aren't in a session, you can always ask them questions you have about writing as you work on a paper. Consider it an extra study space with built-in tutors.

[Note: As of 2013, Prime Time is no longer active.]

Writing Center Website: <http://www.evergreen.edu/writingcenter>

Go to the main site. To the left of the page is a column with various links. Under the "For Students" section, there is a link called "English Language Learners." After clicking on this link, you will find descriptions of online interactive English grammar quizzes with links to the websites. These quizzes are suggested if you find that a particular piece of grammar is difficult. You can practice again and again on any of these sites, without charge. Grammar and spelling are not the most important parts of writing, and so by practicing on your own, you and your tutor can focus on content, flow, organization, and your own voice.

Writing Center Handouts: Found in the handout section at the Writing Center

Handouts can be useful to use before, during, or after a tutoring session. They are sheets with information on the thesis-driven essay, how to write evaluations, how to plan a research paper, and that's just the beginning. It's nice to have something in your hand with guidelines for different pieces of writing, and they are available to all students.

Grammar Garden: Wednesdays from 1pm-2pm in the Writing Center

The Grammar Garden is another resource the Writing Center provides for practice of the "its and bits" of writing: grammar, punctuation, parts of speech, and sentence structure. Grammar Garden is run as a workshop, with tutors inviting you to participate in activities, writing exercises, and more once a week.

[Note: As of 2013, the Writing Center no longer hosts Grammar Garden.]

DIALECT

a. You come to America.

You've taken English for six years in Japan.
 Grammar drills, recitations.
 You have the tools of a new language,
 but now need those tools put in context.
 Confucius and a poem stake your essay soaring.

b. Hymnals. Gospels of languages.

A rich history of lyrical, rhythmic, flowing speech
 Your vast oral history overwhelms
 all the stories told in American mainstream
 Imitated by many but shunned by most,
 the grammar is like any other;
 consistent, universal, yours.

c. The sacred colors of a vibrant house.

Mama's going on at your brother in Spanish,
 Pops is Boston Irish
 with the slang and sound to match.
 When you were learning to write,
 the song of Neruda and the proud Irish ballad
 inspire where your plot twist goes
 and just how peach-blue that sunset at the end is.

d. Standard Dialect English has no equivalent
as warm and inviting as "y'all."

Closest speech to Middle English,
 a vital and bubbling melody.
 Traditional oral stories ricochet in your dreams
 and out of your pen tip, flow like a river down the road.

e. American Academia.

Persuasive, strong kings of their papers.
 A judging source to new ways of writing.
 Bring a hoi polloi perspective,
 a voice born of such a pretty color.

f. Studies:

sociolinguistic and economic;

of education and of home.
Chomsky and a universal grammar
Oh let us acknowledge and enjoy the inherent gift of
language
Sometimes that research paper on
Judaism needs to be expressed through song
Is a haiku and reverence
a more appropriate synthesis paper?

g. Language not deterministic
Not imperialistic but innate
The recognition of
localized
and
distinct
voices will enrich academia,
express the full range of humanity.