SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

Project Cover Memo Assignment Sheet

This sample assignment comes from an English 1100 class in the fall of 2003. The same assignment was given for each essay written, so after the first time, students began to expect it and began to think about these questions while they were writing their second, third, and fourth essays. We include it here to help you to begin to think as writers who are conscious of their processes. As you can tell from the paragraph prompts, the writers in this course were allowed to choose their own topics, and they went through various peer-response activities in class and even had a first draft of their projects read and responded to by the teacher. Likewise, this teacher focuses on real-world audiences (i.e., not the teacher-as-audience), so the third paragraph asks the writers to write about how their audiences, how they chose them and why. Your teacher may have different outcomes and may, then, ask you different questions or ask you to reflect in different ways; these questions are only one of many different options.

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English 1100
The Writer's Memo

All writers "luck up" once in a while, do a little something special in their writing that's unexpected or that has unexpected results with readers. But for the most part, writers work hard at drafting and revision, and each change seems part of a slow and arduous process of figuring out where to go, what to do, what to say. "Good" writers can also, then, talk about what they've done, taking responsibility for the choices they have made, articulating the reasons for those choices, recognizing the effects those choices may have on certain readers.

For the Writer's Memo, I want you to demonstrate your abilities as that second type of writer. If we spend two weeks (or more, sometimes) inventing information, drafting possible versions of a text, responding to each other, revising our texts, etc., then you should be able to talk about the processes you went through to get to this finished draft. To that end, please draft a memo to me, as teacher-evaluator, to help me see your particular processes and what vision you have for this text (that I might have a context in which to read). Below is a template you can use for your memo:

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**Student Name**  
**Course # & Section**  
**Teacher Name**  
**Date**

**Writer's Memo**

Paragraph #1: Trace the evolution of this project. When did you decide on this topic? What topics did you reject in favor of this one? How did your topic evolve from what you knew at first to what you know now? (Other comment relevant to topic evolution)

Paragraph #2: Discuss the specific revisions you've made to the
Paragraph #3: Purpose/Audience/Publication. Explain in one sentence what the purpose of your project is: are you trying to argue something? persuade a reader about something? tell a story to illustrate a point about the world? explore pertinent issues? etc. . . Then, tell me who your primary audience is (those you most want to write to) and why you chose them. Be sure to include what sort of publication site your piece would be appropriate for (or toward which you’re working even if you’re not really ready yet for that space).

You should be able to produce this memo in one single-spaced page. If you can’t say it in one page, cut cut cut. Sometimes, to write reflective/analytical pieces like these, we start by rambling, trying to figure out what we have to say. Fine, but go back and get rid of the “fluff.” I won’t accept them if they’re not typed and single-spaced in Times New Roman 12 pt. font.

Portfolio Cover Letter Assignment Sheet

This Analytical Cover Letter assignment comes from the same English 1100 as the previous Cover Memo assignment. You can tell that this teacher has some very specific expectations about the formatting of these documents, and it’s good that he put those out there for his students rather than hope they’ll guess what’s on his mind or what he wants. However, this Analytical Cover Letter assignment also asks some rather large questions of the students in the course, questions that they will have had some practice with in their Cover Memos but which now need to come together and trace a project from its earliest incarnations to the version the student-writers have put forward in their portfolios. Again, there are any number of ways to construct this assignment; this example is but one of many. Be sure to check with your teacher to make sure that you’re following the assignment she has given you.

English 1100
Analytical Cover Letter

Just as a cover letter would accompany a business portfolio or proposal, just as a cover letter would accompany a resume and letters of recommendation, just as a cover letter accompanies professional writing sent to publishers, so too will your portfolio contain a cover letter. I consider you all writers, and since you’re requesting something from me (evaluation of how your work has progressed), you must ask for it in your cover letter.

So far, you have written analytical cover memos for each of your three major projects; likewise, you've analyzed the proper forums for your three projects.
and have ideas about how to revise. Therefore, you should have had extensive practice at analysis (if you've done your work as I asked you to), and you should also have much of the material you will need to write this analysis of your work. You goal here is to answer the following questions in excessive detail:

- How have your writing projects been revised this semester? Who made what suggestions during peer review? How did you use those suggestions? Why? Which suggestions did you refuse? Why? How did you use class activities (like forum analysis) to revise your projects? Why? What effect did using published models of your choosing have on your projects? Why?
- How do your current projects address their respective audiences? Who are those audiences and what do you think their needs/desires/interests are? How do your revisions acknowledge those audiences' concerns? Why?

Your first paragraph should introduce YOU to ME and explain what I'll be finding in this portfolio. Your last paragraph should explain what GRADE your work has earned as demonstrated by the artifacts in this portfolio (not for how hard you work or how much you've shown up to class; although that's part of the assessment rubric, it is not all). After you have carefully addressed the questions above, you should be in a place for "self-evaluation." You should assess your own work based on those common outcomes for the course. You should measure your portfolio against the evaluation rubric; your ability to do this effectively demonstrates, yet again, your analytical skills.

When you're reading over your cover letter, ask yourself the following three big questions: Does this letter convince the evaluator that he should keep reading and actually get to the essays? Have my discussions of the revisions to my essays whetted his appetite for reading my final drafts? Have I adequately explained how my essays changed from their initial rough drafts to their final "presentation" form?

**Your cover letter must be a minimum of three (3) typed, single-spaced pages, and it must be in a formal letter style (date, inside address, salutation, close, signature), Times New Roman 12-pt. font.**