

LUC WRITING CENTER – “HOW TO WRITE A FREE-WRITE”

If you are taking a writing course, such as LUC’s UCWR 110 the CORE Writing Seminar, your teacher will assign several essays that you must write during the seminar. In addition to these essays, you may also be expected to compose free-writes during class in response to personal prompts such as “*What is the worst thing that happened to you over the summer?*” or prompts based on class assignments such as, “*What is your definition of what is ‘American,’ and does it agree or conflict with Bharati Mukherjee’s idea of how to become American?*”

Depending on your teacher’s requirements you will EITHER keep your written response to yourself OR turn it in to be graded. You will usually have 5-15 minutes in which to construct your free-write. Average length of a 10 minute free-write is anywhere from 2 paragraphs to 2 pages, depending on how quickly a student writes.

If it isn’t graded:

- 1) Remember to take the free-write assignment seriously and use the time you are given to thoughtfully construct a detailed answer to the question. Pretend that you are being asked to write the most thorough, useful, or entertaining answer you possibly can.
- 2) Use this free-write assignment to practice your writing skills. Since it isn’t being graded, you should experience minimal anxiety. This is a writing assignment for you, like a diary entry, and can be as personal as you want.
- 3) If you keep all your rewrites, one day you might appreciate re-reading what your opinions were at this point in your life, and noting how they have or haven’t changed.

If it is graded:

- 1) Remember to take a few moments to consider the question and formulate an answer. If someone had asked you this question aloud, how would you have responded in a way that made clear sense? Writing is no different from speaking; formulating a clear response is necessary for understanding in both mediums of communication.
- 2) Write sentence by sentence, making sure that your spelling is accurate and your thoughts are clear. If you tell a story of personal experience, link it to the prompt, showing how the point of the story helps inform your response to the question. If you are responding to a class reading, remember the points that jumped out at you when you were reading it. Specifically respond to the author’s opinion.
- 3) Don’t feel anxious over the fact that your teacher is reading and grading your work. Free-writes are a tiny percentage of your overall class grade and nothing to worry about. Also, think of free-writes as a chance for your teacher to engage with your thoughts on a less formal level.
- 4) If you have extra time at the end of your free-write, remember to re-read what you’ve just written and correct any spelling errors or add missing words to ensure that your free-write is easy to read.