**THE RED PEN MYTH**

By Emily Grace Thomason, Writing Tutor

The term “Writing Center” sometimes creates the image of a foreboding place in which an essay is delivered to be mercilessly blased upon by a oppressive tutor’s red pen. This common misconception often times keeps people away from the Writing Center, but thankfully Mississippi College’s Writing Center dispels this misconception with its welcoming atmosphere and friendly tutors.

Nathaniel Stickman says that he is a tutor because he likes writing. Times of operation, statement of purpose, contact information and other useful sources of information can be found under the “information” section of our page.

One of the most popular sections of the page is our “Meet the Tutors” photo album. Each one of our highly qualified student tutor’s pictures are featured, along with a writing source and a means of communication between the tutors and the student body. We regularly post updates and useful information, including writing tips, interesting quotes on writing, links to helpful websites, and even pictures of our center events. Students and tutors are both encouraged to engage in conversations or voice opinions on our page’s discussions.

**A COMMA FOR YOUR THOUGHTS**

By Susan Atkinson, Writing Tutor

Getting a paper back with red marks all over it can be very frustrating. Why did the teacher take off three points just for “incorrect use of commas?” A comma just shows where there should be a pause in reading, right? Commas, and all punctuation, have rules about how to use them. Knowing how to use commas correctly can help make a paper’s meaning clearer. Commas are especially useful because they show how words are grouped together or separated. We normally think that commas only separate words, phrases, or clauses in a series, but they do more than that. Commas can show where two independent clauses are joined into one sentence when they are used with a conjunction (and, but, or, yet). Commas should also be used to set off comments and asides, introductory and modifying phrases, and anything else that is not essential to the sentence’s meaning. A few things to remember about commas is to never put them between subject and verb or between verb and object. Also, do not split up compound subjects and compound verbs. If your still have questions about grammar and punctuation, feel free to come by the Writing Center and ask any one of the tutors there.

**YOU’RE THE INSPIRATION**

By Sarah Cole, Writing Tutor

While some may recognize the Chicago reference, I was actually referring to inspiration in terms of your own life. I have sat down to write countless times before, and the words just wouldn’t come. And so, this is for those, who like myself, may lack a bit of inspiration:

- “Read something, particularly something well written. Either that, or take a walk.” —Nathaniel Stickman
- “My best advice to the uninspired writer (having been one such lifeless writer myself many times before)… I would tell them to pay attention to life. Ernest Hemingway once said, ‘Listen now. When people talk, listen completely. Don’t be thinking what you’re going to say, Most people never listen. Nor do they observe. You should be able to go into a room and when you come out know everything that you saw there and not only for that. If that room gave you any feeling you should know exactly what it was that gave you that feeling. Try that for practice.’…Diligence in noticing the mundane, it can be inspiring.” —Sarah Park
- “Put down the pen and paper and go out and live your life. You will never find anything worthwhile to write about if you don’t go see things, talk to people, do crazy things, and read a lot. A good idea won’t just fall into your lap like an apple. If you don’t live life, you won’t be able to write about life.” —Emily Grace Thomason
- “I would tell them to remove distractions and write in a place where they are comfortable and can think clearly. Free-writing often helps me when I lack inspiration… I make myself keep writing until I think of something solid to focus on.” —Emily Grace Thomason
- “Find something you love, and then tell me a story. Don’t try to make it perfect or academic, just tell me about your passions.” —Heather Gothard

**MEET THE TUTORS**

Mindi Ansley: Biology major, English Writing minor
Susan Atkinson: English Writing major, Spanish & English Literature minor
Jessica Awad: English Writing major, Spanish & TESOL minor
Sarah Cole: English Writing major, Communications & TESOL minor
Kimberly Dingess: English Writing major, Christian Studies minor
Michael Dise: English Literature major
Heather Gothard: English Writing major, Communications, German and TESOL minor
Heather Greenlee: Accounting major, English Writing minor
Kristen Jones: English Writing major, Spanish minor
Sarah Park: English Writing major, Communications minor
Christopher Peace: English Writing major, Philosophy minor
Jamie Sexton: English Writing major
Nathaniel Stickman: English Writing major, History minor
Emily Grace Thomason: English Writing major, TESOL minor

Can you guess which tutor is in the fire?
Welcome to the first issue of Writing Centered, the newsletter of the Mississippi College Writing Center! In these pages in the coming semesters, students, faculty, and alumni can hear all about the great things happening with the MC Writing Center, everything from helpful writing tips to unique book suggestions to exciting news from the tutors.

Like the Writing Center itself, our newsletter is highly collaborative. The tutors voted on and chose the newsletter’s name, Writing Centered. All of the articles in this first issue of our newsletter are written by the tutors, and I’d like to thank Susan Atkinson, Sarah Cole, Heather Gothard, Jamie Sexton, and Emily Grace Thomason for all of their smart ideas and hard work. As always, Lingshan Song, Assistant Director of the MC Writing Center, has kept everyone organized and pulled all the material together with her layout and design. And if you didn’t know, Lingshan has been running the Writing Center this spring, along with Dr. Jordan, while I’ve been teaching with the MC London Semester program. I really can’t thank both of them enough for all that they’re doing.

When I left for London, I knew that I would miss the Writing Center, and I do. Being 4500 miles away, however, has also given me an opportunity to really think about all that goes on in the Writing Center. We had over 1000 recorded visits last fall, in Jennings 304, on the balcony, in open classrooms . . . wherever we could fit. Freshmen visited, graduate students visited, excited students visited, international students visited, frustrated students visited, international students visited, adult students visited . . . . Think about that: a cross section of the MC campus visited the Writing Center, over 1000 times, to talk about their writing. That’s a remarkable space on our campus, where anyone can come and talk about her ideas, how she expresses them, and how to express them even more effectively. We really are Writing Centered!

As you can see from this newsletter, the Writing Center is a colorful, engaging, productive, and fun place. We look forward to seeing you at the MC Writing Center!

Dr. Price came across Bryant Lucas at the National Theatre in London. Bryant worked as a tutor when he was an undergraduate at MC. Bryant is now studying Theatre in London. Bryant worked as a tutor when he

By Dr. Steve Price, Writing Center Director

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