



Mississippi College Writing Center

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TUTOR ROULETTE

By Heather Gothard, *Writing Tutor*

You have a paper you need to have looked at. You make an appointment in the appointment book. You sign your name next to the name of one of our tutors, committing to meet with a stranger for an hour (or half hour) of your life to discuss your writing. What do they look like? What will they be like? The day of the appointment, you walk in and try to figure out exactly who your tutor is, with the least amount of awkwardness possible. It would be so much easier if you knew your tutor!

If you have ever been in a situation like this one, never fear! The Mississippi College Writing Center's facebook page has a solution!

The "Meet the Tutors" picture album has photos and information about all of our current tutors, thereby letting you "get to know" your tutor before you arrive for your appointment. It helps you put a face to that name you signed up next to. There are also facts about and quotes from each tutor. Did you know that Lauren Stovall has a plant named Splenda? Or that Jessica Awad plays a mean Ukulele? Sarah Park, when asked about writing, responded, "[Writing is] revealing your humanity to an awfully human world."

Each tutor has a section for you to get to know them, and trust me, each one of them are worth getting to know. So, next time you go to an appointment in the Writing Center, avoid asking the awkward, "Umm....Are you my tutor?" questions.

Check out the "Meet the Tutors" album and familiarize yourself with our tutor's lovely faces. We look forward to meeting you and to working with you!

A HOMO—WHAT?

By Susan Atkinson, *Writing Tutor*

We have all seen those posts on Facebook when one person has misused a word and the next eighty posts are the angry retorts of self-appointed English experts. Grammar freaks everywhere cringe when they see a subject and verb that do not match or a misused word. However, their wagging fingers and disapproving looks, though very annoying, come from an understanding that a misused word can entirely change the meaning of a sentence.

An easy example would be the commonly misused "their, they're, there." Most people understand grammar through sound, so these words sounding the same (also known as a homophone) understandably creates a good deal of confusion. Yet their meanings are completely different and should be understood.

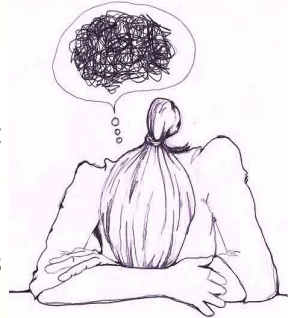
"Their" shows that two or more people possess something, like, "Ben and Jimmy took their grandmother to lunch." The use of "they're," however, shows that two words have been joined together, or contracted, by the apostrophe mark. "They're" really means "they are," like, "They're going to take Grandmother to lunch." The final word of this commonly misused group, "there," shows that a person is either moving towards a certain place or an object rests in a certain place. Take for example, "Ben and Jimmy took Grandmother there." In this case, Ben and Jimmy moved to a certain place with Grandmother.

Now that all these words have been explained, it should be a very easy thing to see that, "They're taking their grandmother there," has a very specific meaning that would be completely changed if the words were misused.

SO
YOU THINK YOU CAN'T WRITE?

By Sarah Cole, *Writing Tutor*

Writing requires two things: thought and willingness. Well, three if you're counting your keyboard or writing utensil. Everyone can write, it's putting what you feel on paper. Writing well, that takes time and practice. But when you get to that place where you are proud and excited about what you have created, then you will find that everything else was worth it. Here are some practical ways to be an effective writer.



- "Having a clear mind and a readiness to think. Writing is thinking."
—Chris Peace
- "I would have to say that the single most important thing I have yet to really learn on how to be an effective writer is to keep writing. Even when you hate what you're writing, even when you have nothing worthy writing to write about, even when you feel a little exhausted or a little encumbered or a little bit like you're going mad....Keep writing. None of them are good enough excuses to stop."
—Sarah Park
- "I would say be true to yourself. Don't worry about sounding 'too smart' or 'fancy', rather write in a way that shows your personality and feelings on the topic. That way your writing is more personal and passionate."
—Emily Grace Thomason
- "Pre-think. Don't absent-mindedly jump into the writing process. Jot down your ideas, bubble-map or categorize patterns or themes to formulate a plan. Know what you are getting into before you write."
—Jamie Sexton
- "Know what you want to say. If you don't, the readers are not going to know what to get out of it."
—Kim Dingess
- "To write effectively, don't write anything you are not inspired by, or moved by yourself."
—Heather Gothard

WRITER'S BLOCK

By Emily Grace Thomason, *Writing Tutor*

If you are or have ever been a college student, then you have inevitably experienced what we affectionately call *writer's block*. Whether you are a teacher, tutor, or student, we all experience moments of writer's block.

You know what I'm talking about... That frustrating moment when you have white pages before you and for some terrible reason your mind goes completely blank. You can think of a million other things you'd rather be doing, and probably even draw a pretty picture on that page, but alas, you still have a paper to write.

Even the Writing Center tutors deal with writer's block sometimes. Because we understand, we are able to help. In those moments when you just can't seem to get words on the page try taking a break... maybe go for a walk or grab a cup of coffee to clear your head. If you still feel stuck when you return then try free writing to get those thoughts onto paper.

Free writing is simply dumping all of your thoughts onto paper with absolutely no regard to order or content. Just think about your topic and write down everything that comes to mind about that topic. After you have poured all of your thoughts out, then look back over your notes and find points that you think are important. Identify the three or four most important points, elaborate on each one and there you have it-- an essay!

In the instance when free writing and coffee don't do the trick, then don't worry. There are other options. Students are always welcome to stop by the Writing Center and meet with a tutor. That's right, you don't actually have to have a paper to come to the Writing Center! We are happy to help you brainstorm, so feel free to come in with your topic and we can talk through your ideas. Most importantly, don't feel alone in your writer's block because goodness knows we all deal with it.

WHAT TUTORS ARE READING:

- *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer
- *On Religion* by John D. Caputo
- *The Hunger Games* by Suzanne Collins
- *Evolution of Adam* by Peter Enns
- *Good Omens* by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett
- *The House of Silk* by Anthony Horowitz
- *Blood Meridian* by Cormac McCarthy
- *Maus I* by Art Spiegelman
- *The Help* by Kathryn Stockett
- *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu
- *The Music School* by John Updike
- *A Severe Mercy* by Sheldon Vanauken



WRITING CENTER

MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR GRADUATES

By Dr. Steve Price, *Writing Center Director*

In some ways, this is an easy column to write. I want to acknowledge and thank our graduating tutors. However, this is also a difficult column, since it's never easy to say "goodbye" or to adequately capture what a group has done over the course of four years.

We have 13 tutors graduating this year, and each has contributed significantly to the MC Writing Center, and we cannot thank them enough. Congratulations! to our 2012 graduates: Mindi Ansley, Jessica Awad, Sarah Cole, Sean Davidson, Michael Dise, Heather Gothard, Kristen Jones, Sarah Park, Christopher Peace, Nathaniel Stickman, Lauren Stoval, Amanda Sturniolo, and Emily Grace Thomason.

The best way for me to characterize this group is "variety," which partly explains why the Writing Center is such an interesting, engaging place. Over the years, they've helped me to better understand everything from philosophy to second language acquisition to Sylvia Plath to Plato to the Beatles to genetics in fish to FaceBook to scripture to Ke\$ha—not to mention writing processes, adaptability, and collaborative learning. They've bantered amongst themselves, and they've supported one another. They've been *loud*, and they've been quietly contemplative. They've filled the third floor of Jennings with both their laughter and their seriousness. I see something new from them each day, which I love.

I'm most proud of this group for the way they have responded to being pushed. We want our Writing Program, and the Writing Center, to challenge our students, and this group has always risen to the occasion. This group of tutors has worked with more students and a greater range of writing than any in the history of the MC Writing Center. Again and again, we've asked them to do something unusual, to try something new, to develop something original . . . and they have done it. Thanks to their leadership and motivation, we now have in the Writing Center, for example, expanded writing fellows programs, increased undergraduate research, a greater presence on the internet, improved resources, and a strong tutor voice that helps to shape what we do.

So, to Mindi, Jessica, Sarah C., Sean, Michael, Heather, Kristen, Sarah P., Christopher, Nathaniel, Lauren, Amanda, and Emily Grace, we offer our congratulations and our thanks for all that you have done in the MC Writing Center. You may be graduating, but your impact remains.



Three graduating tutors snap a picture with Writing Center Director and Assistant Director on the third floor balcony of Jennings Hall. (L to R): Emily Grace Thomason, Mindi Ansley, Lingshan Song, Dr. Steve Price, and Christopher Peace.

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METAPHORS AS A STRATEGIC WRITING DEVICE

By Jamie Sexton, *Writing Tutor*

The implications of utilizing rhetorical devices within your writing can mean the perilous balance between over-the-top dramaturgical and an emphatically well-placed flavor. Rhetorical devices serve to emphasize your message, not merely to serve as prose. With this in mind, writers, let's discuss a strategic device.

Metaphors, although numerous in forms, most commonly bond two objects, when the words not only link a few qualities, but the fullness of both images. Here is a particularly common example in capturing the emotion of love: "My love for you is a burning fire." Although the author may intentionally parallel these supposed attributes: passion, heat, or growth; he additionally and subtly associates all of the characteristics of fire to his love, for example: the fire's dangerous and insatiable characteristics. The power of metaphors is the ability command an image – initially unrelated – to bind with an object, bringing a new sense of awareness, otherwise impossible to achieve with a few adjectives.

As far as academic protocol, metaphors become useful when the author needs to suffice his audience with an example for vividness. They can handily provoke emphasis on a key idea, while bringing the idea into a new light. Again I remind authors to make sure that their metaphors are dependable and suitable. In the same manner that scientists cannot genetically fuse a rabbit and a tortoise together, neither should improper and thoughtless metaphors be randomly morphed. Mutant metaphors will not survive academic writing.

WRITING FOR YOUR HEALTH

By Jamie Sexton, *Writing Tutor*

Inevitably, students complain of their hatred for writing – for their comments overflow with discontentment with their writing abilities, including the dreadful process. However, writing has been proven by research to be an outstanding tactic for improving one's health: socially, psychologically, and in fact physically.

Writing is indeed a workout, so go to the gym with your writing. By benching the weight of your pen, expressive writing captures and expresses the difficult matters that suppress many health benefits; likewise, the priming, reforming, and recovering drink of ink avails the mind, as well as the body. According to an article published in *Psychology Today* "Will a Poem a Day Keep the Doctor Away?" expressive writing attributes to strengthening one's immune system, lowering blood pressure, and uplifting moods (alongside many other astonishing health benefits).

Prep yourself for the weight of your pencil, as you add the bars of papers to your desk, and begin lifting your writing towards the goal of an improved health.

WRITING CENTER SERVICES

Our purpose is to help writers at any stage in the writing process. We confidentially work with writers on a variety of writing issues from brainstorming and pre-writing, to researching and evaluating sources.

We serve two types of writers: walk-ins and scheduled writers. You may drop in for a single visit, make an appointment before you come, or even establish regular appointments. We have teamed up with the Intensive English Program (IEP) to further our outreach to international students, and have also partnered with our football team to establish the Football Player Initiative Tutoring Program.

We look forward to working with you!

Visit the Writing Center in 304 Jennings Hall.

MONDAY—THURSDAY

9 AM — 8 PM

FRIDAY

9 AM — 3 PM

(MAKE AN
APPOINTMENT)

Call 601-925-7289

E-mail writingcenter@mc.edu

Drop by 304 Jennings Hall