

# The Johns Hopkins University Writing Center

krieger.jhu.edu/writingcenter | writingcenter@jhu.edu | +1 (410) 516-4258

**Gilman Hall 230**, Hutzler Reading Room, north wing of “**The Hut**”

Fall and Spring semesters: **Sunday–Thursday, 2–10pm**. Summer hours TBA.

The Writing Center at JHU offers free, 50-minute, in-person writing consultations for students in the **Krieger School of Arts and Sciences** and **Whiting School of Engineering**.

We work with students of **all levels of academic ability and writing experience**. Students can benefit from our consultations at **all stages of the writing process**—from pre-draft discussions about thesis statements, to fine-tuning the organization and clarity of more fully developed drafts.

Writing Center staff members are experienced, highly-skilled graduate and undergraduate students, who have undergone rigorous training in both academic writing and writing consultation.

In 2014, we conducted more than 1,800 consultations. Over 80% of student evaluations gave the Writing Center the highest possible feedback of “Very Helpful,” and more than 99% “would recommend the Writing Center to a friend.”

**Appointments are strongly recommended: [krieger.jhu.edu/writingcenter](http://krieger.jhu.edu/writingcenter)**. Walk-in consultations are sometimes available, beginning on the hour.

## The Writing Center serves:

- **Undergraduate and graduate students** in KSAS and WSE.
- **Recent KSAS and WSE alumni**, in preparing personal statements for applications to graduate or professional school.

**We do not assist students in other JHU divisions** (such as Business, Public Health, Advanced International Studies, Peabody, Education, Nursing, or Medicine), or **JHU employees**.

## The Writing Center works on:

- **Academic writing**: formal, analytical, argument-oriented essays and papers, assigned in courses or as requirements for KSAS/WSE programs of study. Examples include:
  - Essays for **Expository Writing**.
  - **Research papers** in KSAS and WSE courses.

- Assignments that require formal prose **summary, explanation, analysis, interpretation, or argument**—whether in humanities, social sciences, or STEM fields.
- **Great Books at Hopkins** explication assignments.
- Undergraduate or masters **theses**, or doctoral **dissertations**—*see note on page length below*.
- Take-home exams featuring academic writing—*only with explicit written permission from the instructor*.

- **Personal statements for applications to graduate or professional school**, including the American Medical College Application Service (AMCAS) Personal Statement.

Appointments can usually cover **up to 10 pages** of double-spaced writing. For longer texts, you can choose what portion you want to focus on.

## How consultations work

**What can I expect from my tutor?** At the beginning of the session, your tutor will ask you about your assignment and how you have begun to approach it. If you know what you want to work on during the session, you should tell your tutor early in the session.

**If you have not yet written anything**, you and your tutor can discuss your ideas and consider different ways of developing and organizing them. You may come up with an outline or a thesis statement, or you may discover that you need to do more research before you can begin an outline.

**If applicable, please bring previous drafts, instructors' written feedback, and assignment guidelines or prompts.**

**If you have written something**, including an outline or notes, your tutor will read through your writing and discuss its strengths and areas for improvement.

**Please bring *printed, double-spaced* copies of your writing. Print your work before your appointment.** No computers, please.

**Our sessions focus on the argument and structure of your paper.** Among other things, we attempt to determine whether you have responded to an assignment properly; whether you have a thesis and have supported it with evidence; and whether your paragraphs are cohesive and in a logical order.

**We can also use part of the session to address style and mechanics.** We can help *you* to make your sentences clear, concise, and grammatically correct. We can also strategize the best ways to quote and cite other sources. Rather than identifying every problem in your writing, however, we can diagnose *patterns* of error and set goals for your revision. Talking through these problems, rather than just fixing them, will help you become a better reader of your own work in the future.

**Please note** that the Writing Center does not offer specialized tutoring in *discipline-specific* knowledge. Rather, we focus on the skill and craft of academic writing as they apply across the disciplines and to wider academic audiences. Likewise, we never comment on *grades* or *course content*, which are the exclusive domain of faculty.

## The Writing Center does NOT work on:

- Creative writing (fiction, poetry, drama, screenplays)
- Resumes, CVs, or application cover letters
- Business memos, reports, or presentations
- Visual or multimedia works
- Technical writing, documentation, or software
- Test preparation (GRE, LSAT, MCAT, etc.)

## Appointment guidelines

- **No assignments that are due the same day.**
- Up to **three appointments for a single text**, and **two appointments per week**. Graduate students: up to three appointments per month.
- If multiple students are producing a single text, *all* students must attend the consultation.

## No proofreading or copyediting

**The Writing Center does not offer proofreading or copyediting service.**

However, if you need proofreading or copyediting (or any other writing assistance not provided by the Writing Center), please email [writingcenter@jhu.edu](mailto:writingcenter@jhu.edu), and provide your name, contact information, a description of what you're looking for, and proposed payment. Your request will be forwarded to our staff, who may reply individually on their own behalf, separate from the Writing Center.

## English as a Second Language (ESL)

The Writing Center does not offer specialized ESL assistance, nor do we correct all errors in English usage throughout a text. However, we often assist ESL students in problems of argument, organization, and overall clarity of expression.