

Syllabus: Essay-Writing

Summer 2025

Class Location: Zoom, at <https://zoom.us/j/5369560569>

Instructor: Lily Gu

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Course Outline

Class 1: The Whole Composition

Sunday, June 22, 4 pm

- Introduce process of writing essays, how to allocate time for timed essay, what exams this will be useful for
- **HW:** Finish persuasive essay from class

Class 2: Openings

Sunday, June 29, 4 pm

- Review persuasive essays
- Overview of three main types of essays
- Types of openings
- **HW:** Try writing a new opening for your essay from Class 1 (or for a different essay if you'd prefer).

Class 3: Narrative essays

Sunday, July 13, 4 pm

- Read student openings, review openings, answer any questions that arise
- Structure of a narrative essay
- How to start writing a narrative essay
- **HW:** Write a narrative essay

Class 4: Sensory and factual details

Sunday, July 20, 4 pm

- Review narrative essays, answer any questions
- Introduce sensory and factual details
- Examples of sensory and factual details
- How to weave details into essays
- **HW:** Add sensory and factual details to your narrative essay from Class 3 (or for a different essay if you'd prefer)

Class 5: Informative essays

Sunday, July 27, 4 pm

- Review details, answer any questions
- Structure and purpose of an informative essay
- How to organize an informative essay
- How to research for an informative essay

- **HW:** Write an informative essay

Class 6: Essay middles

Sunday, August 3, 4 pm

- Review informative essays, answer questions
- Sticking to the main point or purpose
- **HW:** Review your informative essay. Did everything in the middle support the main point?

Class 7: Closings

Sunday, August 10, 4 pm

- Types of conclusions
- When to use each type
- Students discuss/vote on most useful topic for Class 8
- **HW:** Look at the conclusion of one of your essays. Try rewriting it as a different kind of conclusion, or explain why the conclusion you picked was perfect for the topic.

Class 8: [Topic chosen by students – likely editing, revising, tests, or creative writing/storytelling]

Sunday, August 17, 4 pm

- Address any questions from previous topics
- If editing – SPAG and how to edit essays
- If revising – how it differs from editing and how to do it
- If creative writing – creative fiction and poetry, storytelling techniques and structures, how to brainstorm, making time for writing
- If test – ACT/SAT writing, testing into specific high schools, 5th and 8th grade SOLs
- Resources to keep practicing or improving
- Last 30 minutes: Write a timed essay using techniques learned (no analysis or source text); feedback will be provided to everyone who submits their essay.
- **HW:** None!