

3 Cover Letters

What is the Cover Letter? The cover letter is a short (1.5-2-page) **informal reflection** that you will write three times: one each for Phase 1, 2, and 3. In this cover letter you will detail what you learned during each respective phase. Each cover letter should be pasted at the top of the corresponding essay. I will read your cover letter prior to reading your essay, so use the cover letter as an opportunity to communicate what you want me to know.

Why reflect? One of the best tools we have for learning is through reflection, which helps us to reinforce our knowledge. And that's because our *awareness* of what we know grows and fortifies when we consciously build a vocabulary for *naming* and *discussing* what we know. A major goal of this composition course, then, is for you to reflect on your learning and writing practices. These cover letters will further serve this purpose later since you will be referencing them in your final Self-Assessment essay due at the end of the semester.

What's the format and style? Cover letters can be written in essay or letter format (but not numbered or bulleted format). Language differences are most welcome. Informality is most welcome. The most important thing is that you are capturing your perspectives, experiences, and knowledge.

What to include? In each cover letter, you should reflect on these questions (in no particular order):

1. Who is your audience and how did you tailor your language and rhetorical choices to appeal to them and/or meet their needs?
2. What are some of the most meaningful insights you've gained in this phase (and through writing this assignment) regarding language and literacy (as topics you're learning about *and* as practices you're developing)?
3. What concepts/terms have most impacted your learning and your writing practices (e.g., rhetoric; rhetorical situation; context; exigence; purpose; author; audience; text; genre; argument; evidence; something else)? How so?
4. In what ways has this phase's assignment helped you to achieve (some/any of) the Course Learning Outcomes? (These outcomes are listed in the syllabus and offered below for convenience.) Please provide actual examples (e.g., moments in/after class or through the completion of certain assignments) and please actually refer to and **quote at least one Course Learning Outcome**.

Course learning outcomes

1. Recognize the role of language attitudes and standards in empowering, oppressing, and hierarchizing languages and their users, and be open to communicating across different languages and cultures.
2. Explore and analyze, in writing and reading, a variety of genres and rhetorical situations.
3. Develop strategies for reading, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing.
4. Recognize and practice key rhetorical terms and strategies when engaged in writing situations.
5. Engage in the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes.
6. Understand and use print and digital technologies to address a range of audiences.
7. Locate research sources (including academic journal articles, magazine and newspaper articles) in the library's databases or archives and on the Internet and evaluate them for credibility, accuracy, timeliness, and bias.
8. Compose texts that integrate your stance with appropriate sources using strategies such as summary, critical analysis, interpretation, synthesis, and argumentation.
9. Practice systematic application of citation conventions.