

Homeschool



COMPOSITION FOR HIGH SCHOOL

Notes for instructors: [The Writing Center at UNC](#) has put together a large collection of writing resources for college writing that are excellent tools for teaching upper level homeschool composition. The center's downloads and videos offer detailed explanations about research, sourcing, organization, editing and proofreading, voice, fallacies, thesis statements, and dozens of other writing topics. The resources are arranged alphabetically, making them easy to find by topic but not offering much in the way of an orderly progression for teaching. The following is a suggested order of study for using the resources for composition for a homeschooled high school student. The length of time the student uses to complete the assignments might range from 2-3 weeks to several months. For more about the process, see the [corresponding blog post](#).

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<http://www.thehomeschoolmom.com>*

Step 1 // Writing About Literature

Read Writing About Literature. Familiarize yourself with how you might write about the book you have chosen using the ideas presented. (If you are using a topic other than literature, choose the appropriate topic from Writing About Specific Fields in the last column of the handout page.)

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-fiction/>

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/>

Step 2 // Argument

Read the argument page and think about how you would like to argue your thesis for the book you have chosen.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/argument/>

Step 3 // Brainstorming

Read about brainstorming and begin brainstorming for your essay. Choose the methods that work best for you, but do at least 3 methods. The more methods you use the better, because it gives you lots of things to pull from when you start writing.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/brainstorming/>

Step 4 // Summarizing

Review the information on the page for Writing About Literature. Read about summarizing what you know at the provided link. Using the brainstorming resources that you did in the last assignment and what you just read about summarizing, start writing all of your random thoughts about the topic into sentences and/or paragraphs in a word processor document. Use the return key after each thought group to separate it from the next one. Do not worry about connecting your thoughts, just form them into sentences and/or paragraphs with returns after each. Print your work.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/summary-using-it-wisely/>

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-fiction/>

Step 5 // Color Coding

Read the color coding page. Take the random sentences and paragraphs that you have written as part of your brainstorming and cut with scissors between each line where you have hit the return key. Use color coding to organize them into groups (you can just make a line or mark on each piece of paper with a colored marker where each color represents a topic). Group the colors and evaluate the amount of information that you have for each one. Items that do not have much information will need to be evaluated for whether the topic should be further researched and included or dropped altogether.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/color-coding/>

Step 6 // Thesis Statements

Read the information at the link in preparation for deciding on a thesis for your paper. Using the information on the Thesis page, come up with a thesis for your essay on the book you have chosen. Choose a thesis that you feel strongly about and that you can argue effectively. It should try to convince the reader of something instead of just listing facts.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/thesis-statements/>

Step 7 // Outlines

Review the information on the Writing About Literature page. Use the color coding that you have completed to determine the main sections of your paper. Watch the video about outlines at the link provided. Create an outline.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sp0MWYbLUFU>

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/literature-fiction/>

Step 8 // Evidence and Evaluating Print Sources

It is time to incorporate evidence into your thoughts for your paper. Read the information on the evidence page at the link provided. Using your outline, begin looking for sources that present information that backs up your thesis. You should have at least 5 sources and only 2 of them may be Internet sources. For the others, you may use primary sources, books, articles, encyclopedias, and other sources as indicated in the provided link. Plan to go to the library to work on this. Before choosing your sources, read about evaluating print sources page at the link provided. For each source, create a notecard with the source information on the back and notes from the reading on the front. When you write the paper, you will know where you read an idea and can source it. All of the ideas presented in your paper should be sourced inline and cited at the end in MLA format (more on this later).

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/evidence/>

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/evaluating-print-sources/>

Step 9 // Reading to Write

As you read through the material you have chosen as sources, it is important to know what to look for. Read about reading to write in the link provided. Use the information to help you read through the source material with an eye toward what you will write. Since this is a shorter assignment than most college papers, you do not need to create a calendar as suggested, but follow the suggestions under Writing Strategies on the linked page.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/reading-to-write/>

Step 10 // Fallacies

People often commit logical fallacies when arguing a point. It is important to avoid this because fallacies undermine your argument. Read about fallacies at the provided link and make sure that as you start writing, you are not falling into the trap of arguing your point with poor logic.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/fallacies/>

Step 11 // Flow

It's time to start writing! Now that all of your research and preparation work is done, it is time to write. Watch the video at the link provided to learn how to make your thoughts flow in your writing.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/flow/>

Step 12 // MLA Formatting and Citations

MLA is the preferred formatting style for literature papers. Other types of papers use different formatting styles, so always choose the style that is the standard for the subject matter (it will usually be specified by your instructor). Read over the general guidelines at the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) and familiarize yourself with the MLA format guidelines. Be sure to set up your paper using the standards provided.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Step 13 // Introductions

Read about introductions at the link provided. Use it and your outline to write your introduction.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/introductions/>

Step 14 // Paragraphs

Read the information at the link provided about writing paragraphs. Use it and your outline to begin writing your supporting paragraphs for your paper. The number of paragraphs in your paper should be determined by how many you need to prove your thesis with ample evidence and concise wording. Over the next few days, write all of the supporting paragraphs. If you make a statement or supposition, you should support it with evidence from one of your sources. Cite each source from the notecard you created when you were researching. Although you will be checking the format of your citations when you proofread your paper, you should put the citations inline as you work so that you will not be confused later. Be concise in your writing.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/paragraphs/>

Step 15 // Transitions

Read the information on transitions at the link provided. Reread your introduction and paragraphs and make sure that you are making logical transitions from one sentence to the next and from one paragraph to the next. Make revisions as necessary.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/transitions/>

Step 16 // Conclusions

Read the information at the link provided about conclusions. Keeping in mind what you read, write your conclusion. Pay particular attention to "Strategies for writing an effective conclusion" to help you come up with a conclusion that goes beyond just a summary.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/conclusions/>

Step 17 // Step Away

Now that you have written your conclusion, your first draft is complete. Take a break for a couple of days from your paper so that you can look at it objectively when you revise.

Step 18 // Reading Aloud

Reading your paper aloud can help you identify problems with flow, sentence structure, and logic. Read the information at the provided link and use it to read your paper aloud and look for problems. Revise as necessary.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/reading-aloud/>

Step 19 // Reorganizing Drafts

Read about reorganizing drafts at the link provided. Choose 2 of the strategies (or more if you think they will be helpful) and use them to check the organization of your work. Based on what you learn, do any necessary revisions to make your paper's flow more logical and organized.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/reorganizing-drafts/>

Step 20 // Revising Drafts and Conciseness

Read about revising drafts and go back to your paper. Read through your paper and go through the steps of revision. You may need to do a lot of work - that isn't a bad thing. All good writing goes through a heavy revision process, and the end result shows whether the writer was willing to be relentless with revision. The more papers you write, the faster the process will go. For your first papers, you will feel like you should be done by the time you get to the revision step. That is normal, but you will find that some of the most important work takes place after the first draft is complete and you reread your paper with a critical eye. View the video about conciseness, paying attention to removing ineffective words or excessive wordiness. Using the information in the link about revising drafts, revise the draft.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/revising-drafts/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVt1WmPwL2I>

Step 21 // Editing and Proofreading

Now that your paper is revised, it's time to look at the grammar and spelling. Read the information at the Editing and Proofreading link. Watch the video about proofreading and use the suggestions to proofread your paper. Use *Writers Inc.* or the reference book of your choice to answer any questions that you have.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/editing-and-proofreading/>

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/proofreading/>

Step 22 // Citing Your Work

It is time to format your citations. First, watch the Why We Cite video. Next, watch How We Cite. Read Introduction to Citations to learn about the different styles of citations and when each is used. Use the Purdue OWL Formatting Guide to help you format your citations correctly for the final draft of your paper.

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/why-we-cite/>

<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/how-we-cite/>

<http://www2.lib.unc.edu/instruct/citations/index.html?section=introduction&page=1>

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

Step 23 // Final Draft

Turn in your final draft complete with MLA formatting.