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Leadership via design

Foundations of Analytical Writing Curriculum Guide

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# Foundations of Analytical Writing

Course Description:  
This course provides learners with essential skills for effective analytical writing, suitable for both academic and professional contexts. Through engaging asynchronous materials, learners will explore key concepts in analytical writing, develop critical thinking, and practice writing structured, evidence-based arguments.

## Learning Objectives:

By the end of this course, learners will be able to:

**Define analytical writing** and distinguish it from other writing styles such as descriptive and persuasive writing.

**Identify and apply the stages of the writing process**—including prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing—to create a well-structured analytical piece.

**Develop clear, concise thesis statements** that present a strong argument and provide a focus for analytical writing.

**Structure analytical arguments logically** by effectively organizing claims, evidence, and analysis within body paragraphs.

**Critically analyze and evaluate evidence**, integrating it into written arguments to support and strengthen the overall thesis.

**Demonstrate critical thinking** by evaluating the credibility of sources and recognizing bias and assumptions in arguments.

**Write with clarity and precision**, avoiding common grammatical errors and ensuring that the writing is concise and readable.

**Revise and edit analytical essays** for coherence, clarity, and structure, incorporating feedback to improve the final draft.

**Reflect on personal writing progress** and identify areas for continued growth and development in analytical writing skills.

# Course Outline:

## Module 1: Introduction to Analytical Writing

* **Objective:** Define analytical writing and its role in academic and professional contexts.
* **Key Topics:**
  + What is analytical writing?
  + Differences between analytical, descriptive, and persuasive writing
  + Importance of clarity and objectivity in analytical writing
* **Assessment:** Short quiz on writing styles

## Module 2: Understanding the Writing Process

* **Objective:** Introduce learners to the stages of the writing process and how they apply to analytical writing.
* **Key Topics:**
  + Prewriting strategies (brainstorming, outlining)
  + Drafting a thesis statement
  + Revising for clarity and coherence
* **Writing Exercise:** Create an outline for a sample analytical essay

## Module 3: Structuring an Analytical Argument

* **Objective:** Teach learners how to structure a logical and coherent analytical argument.
* **Key Topics:**
  + Components of an argument (claim, evidence, analysis)
  + How to organize ideas clearly and logically
  + Paragraph structure and transitions
* **Writing Exercise:** Write an introductory paragraph with a thesis statement and outline supporting arguments

## Module 4: Analyzing Evidence and Supporting Your Argument

* **Objective:** Help learners understand how to critically analyze evidence and use it effectively in their writing.
* **Key Topics:**
  + Types of evidence (data, quotes, examples)
  + How to interpret and integrate evidence into writing
  + Avoiding logical fallacies and bias
* **Assessment:** Quiz on types of evidence and their use

## Module 5: Developing Critical Thinking Skills for Analytical Writing

* **Objective:** Equip learners with the skills to think critically and evaluate sources.
* **Key Topics:**
  + Critical reading strategies
  + Evaluating the credibility of sources
  + Recognizing assumptions and bias in writing
* **Writing Exercise:** Analyze a provided text and evaluate the strength of its argument

## Module 6: Writing with Clarity and Precision

* **Objective:** Teach learners how to write clearly and concisely, avoiding common errors and improving readability.
* **Key Topics:**
  + Sentence structure and clarity
  + Common grammatical pitfalls
  + Strategies for concise writing
* **Writing Exercise:** Revise a provided paragraph to improve clarity and precision

## Module 7: Finalizing and Polishing Your Analytical Essay

* **Objective:** Guide learners through the process of revising, editing, and proofreading their work.
* **Key Topics:**
  + Editing for coherence, clarity, and structure
  + Proofreading techniques
  + Incorporating feedback
* **Final Assignment:** Submit a polished analytical essay for assessment

## Module 8: Reflecting on the Writing Process

* **Objective:** Encourage learners to reflect on their growth as writers and identify areas for continued improvement.
* **Key Topics:**
  + Self-assessment and setting future writing goals
  + Common challenges in analytical writing and strategies for overcoming them
* **Assessment:** Reflective writing exercise

## Additional Course Features:

* **Reading Assignments**: Selected articles or excerpts demonstrating strong analytical writing.
* **Quizzes**: To assess understanding of key concepts (writing styles, structuring arguments, analyzing evidence).
* **Writing Exercises**: Hands-on assignments to practice writing skills.
* **Discussion Forums**: Optional space for peer feedback and idea exchange.

# Analytical Writing Exercises

## Exercise 1: Writing a Thesis Statement

**Objective:** Practice creating a clear, concise thesis statement.  
**Instructions:**

* Read the following prompt: *"How has technology impacted modern education?"*
* Write a thesis statement that takes a clear position on the impact of technology on education. Your thesis should answer the prompt directly in 1-2 sentences.

## Exercise 2: Analyzing Evidence

**Objective:** Develop the ability to critically analyze evidence and connect it to an argument.  
**Instructions:**

* Given the evidence below, write 3-4 sentences explaining how it supports the argument that *online learning provides flexibility for students with busy schedules.*  
  **Evidence:** *A survey found that 85% of students who work part-time reported that online courses allowed them to balance their work and school commitments more effectively.*

## Exercise 3: Structuring an Argument

**Objective:** Practice organizing ideas into a coherent, logical argument.  
**Instructions:**

* Write a short essay outline in response to the prompt: *"Should social media platforms be held accountable for the spread of misinformation?"*
* Your outline should include:
  1. Thesis statement
  2. Three supporting points
  3. Evidence or examples for each point

## Exercise 4: Writing Clear and Concise Sentences

**Objective:** Practice eliminating unnecessary words and improving clarity.  
**Instructions:**

* Revise the following sentence to make it more concise:  
  *"In today's modern world, it is very important for people to be aware of the fact that they need to protect their personal information online."*

## Exercise 5: Comparing Two Texts

**Objective:** Practice comparing and contrasting arguments from two different texts.  
**Instructions:**

* Read two short articles that present opposing views on *the role of standardized testing in education*.
* Write a 1-2 paragraph analysis comparing how each author uses evidence to support their argument. Focus on which argument is more persuasive and why.

## Exercise 6: Critical Reading and Response

**Objective:** Develop critical thinking and analytical writing skills by responding to a text.  
**Instructions:**

* Read a provided article on a current issue (e.g., climate change, economic inequality, etc.).
* Write a 200-word response analyzing the author's main argument. Do you agree or disagree with their position? Use specific examples from the article to support your analysis.

# Analytical Writing Books

**1. “They Say / I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing” by Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein**

* **Overview**: This book provides a straightforward approach to structuring arguments, particularly in academic writing. It focuses on understanding how to engage with others' ideas (what "they say") and then how to respond with your own argument (what "I say").
* **Best for**: Learning how to enter into a dialogue with existing ideas and improve the structure of analytical essays.

**2. “The Elements of Style” by William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White**

* **Overview**: A classic guide to writing with clarity and precision. It provides essential rules of grammar, style, and composition that are helpful for making analytical writing more concise and readable.
* **Best for**: Writing with clarity, eliminating unnecessary words, and developing a stronger command of grammar and style.

**3. “Critical Thinking, Reading, and Writing: A Brief Guide to Argument” by Sylvan Barnet and Hugo Bedau**

* **Overview**: This book teaches the skills of critical thinking and writing, with a focus on constructing persuasive arguments. It covers how to read critically, analyze arguments, and write essays that are both logical and compelling.
* **Best for**: Developing critical reading skills and understanding how to build and evaluate arguments.

**4. “Writing Analytically” by David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen**

* **Overview**: This book offers a detailed process for learning how to analyze texts, ideas, and situations. It teaches students how to go beyond summary and surface-level observations, guiding them to think more deeply and write analytically.
* **Best for**: Building deeper analysis skills and learning how to move from summary to interpretation and evaluation in writing.

**5. “How to Write a Lot: A Practical Guide to Productive Academic Writing” by Paul J. Silvia**

* **Overview**: Although focused on academic writing, this book provides useful tips for anyone looking to become a more productive and effective writer. It covers goal setting, overcoming writer’s block, and building writing habits.
* **Best for**: Anyone who needs help with writing productivity and maintaining a consistent writing routine.

**6. “The Craft of Research” by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams**

* **Overview**: This comprehensive guide to research-based writing teaches how to construct persuasive and well-supported arguments. It emphasizes critical thinking, research, and structuring evidence effectively.
* **Best for**: Those working on research-based analytical writing, particularly in academic or professional contexts.

**7. “Thinking, Fast and Slow” by Daniel Kahneman**

* **Overview**: Although not a traditional writing guide, this book by Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman offers deep insights into how people think. It discusses two modes of thinking—intuitive (fast) and analytical (slow)—and how to apply critical thinking more deliberately.
* **Best for**: Enhancing your understanding of how we process information and improving critical thinking skills, which are essential for strong analytical writing.

**8. “A Rulebook for Arguments” by Anthony Weston**

* **Overview**: This concise guide to making arguments is a helpful reference for anyone learning to write analytically. It provides clear rules for forming logical, well-supported arguments in a structured and concise way.
* **Best for**: Learning the basics of constructing logical arguments in writing.

**9. “Style: Lessons in Clarity and Grace” by Joseph M. Williams and Joseph Bizup**

* **Overview**: This book is an excellent resource for learning how to write more clearly and gracefully. It focuses on writing techniques that improve readability, flow, and style, which are all crucial for analytical writing.
* **Best for**: Improving sentence structure, clarity, and overall writing style.

**10. “Thinking Critically” by John Chaffee**

* **Overview**: This book is a comprehensive guide to critical thinking, encouraging readers to analyze their own thinking and assumptions as well as those of others. It’s an excellent companion to analytical writing as it teaches how to break down complex ideas and arguments.
* **Best for**: Developing critical thinking skills to support analytical writing.

# Analytical Writing Template

# Introduction

Introduce the topic and provide background information.

# Thesis Statement

State the main argument or position clearly.

# Body Paragraph 1 - Topic Sentence

Introduce the first major point supporting the thesis.

# Body Paragraph 1 - Supporting Evidence

Provide evidence (data, quotes, examples) to support the point.

# Body Paragraph 1 - Analysis

Analyze the evidence and explain how it supports the thesis.

# Body Paragraph 2 - Topic Sentence

Introduce the second major point supporting the thesis.

# Body Paragraph 2 - Supporting Evidence

Provide evidence (data, quotes, examples) to support the point.

# Body Paragraph 2 - Analysis

Analyze the evidence and explain how it supports the thesis.

# Body Paragraph 3 - Topic Sentence

Introduce the third major point supporting the thesis.

# Body Paragraph 3 - Supporting Evidence

Provide evidence (data, quotes, examples) to support the point.

# Body Paragraph 3 - Analysis

Analyze the evidence and explain how it supports the thesis.

# Conclusion

Summarize the major points made in the body paragraphs.

# Restate Thesis and Summarize

Restate the thesis in light of the evidence provided.

# Final Thought or Call to Action

End with a thought-provoking statement or a call to action.