



How to Be Successful in Your College English Class Tip Sheet

Most, if not all, first-year college students will be required to take an English class. We've met with many students who have felt stressed about taking an English class. You may feel unsure of what to expect or uncertain about how to pass the class. Well, here are some tips for achieving success in your English course!

Before you start...

- **Review the basics!**
 - You should start your college English class with a basic understanding of grammar, sentence structure, and parts of speech, i.e. nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc. If you need to refresh your memory, here are a few helpful links:
 - **The Top 25 Grammatical Terms** - <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-top-grammatical-terms-1692378>
 - **Basic Sentence Structures** - <https://www.thoughtco.com/sentence-parts-and-sentence-structures-1689671>
- **Know what to expect.**
 - Your English class will likely be comprised of **two main components: Writing and Literature.**
 - **Prepare to write a lot of essays!** You're probably familiar with the "5 Paragraph Essay" structure you used in high school. Well, you'll be expected to write essays that are longer and more complex than the essays you wrote in high school.
 - **You'll likely be given a lot of literature to read,** which will consist of novels, essays, and/or articles. It will be expected that you will analyze and share your critical thoughts about what you are reading.
 - **Prepare to think differently.** As mentioned above, your English instructor will expect you to think critically about what you are reading. What is critical thinking? Critical thinking answers the question of "What does this mean?" rather than "What does this say?"
- **Make sure you have the materials for the class.** More than likely, you'll be assigned a textbook/reader and possibly a writing handbook.
 - Your writing handbook will likely contain helpful information about how to plan, draft, and edit an essay. It's a useful tool.
 - Your textbook/reader will likely contain the assigned readings for the semester. Take a look at its contents to familiarize yourself with the reading material ahead of time.

Dr. Kimberly Sims. Charleston Southern University. "Succeeding in College English Classes." YouTube.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mQCsv8y4o>

Richard Nordquist. ThoughtCo. "7 Secrets to Success in English 101: How to Succeed in Freshman Composition."

<https://www.thoughtco.com/secrets-to-success-in-freshman-english-1692851>

Diana Blake. Personal Blog – College Success for Moms. "7 Tips for Surviving an English Class."

<https://collegesuccessformoms.wordpress.com/2014/10/04/7-tips-for-surviving-an-english-class/>

Leah Salyer. Study.com. "How to Pass English 101." <http://study.com/academy/popular/how-to-pass-english-101.html>

Stephanie Torreno. Bright Hub. "Reading and Writing 101: Get Yourself Ready for College English."

<http://www.brighthub.com/education/college/articles/50516.aspx>

Study.com. "What is Plagiarism? – Definition & Explanation." <http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-plagiarism-definition-lesson-quiz.html>



Once class begins...

- **Do ALL the readings before each class!** Your instructor will ask you for your input about what you read.
- **Read all the material more than once.** Read once for your enjoyment. Then, read it again to analyze the text. Take notes, highlight and underline the text, write your questions in the margin, etc. Really dive in there!
- **When writing essays, write multiple drafts!** It's difficult to organize your thoughts and include everything that you want to say in your first draft. Give yourself time to write at least two drafts to improve your chances of submitting your best work.
- **Never plagiarize your work!** Plagiarism can result in major penalties. The best way to avoid plagiarism is to cite your work. If you are unsure of what plagiarism is, check out this helpful link: <http://study.com/academy/lesson/what-is-plagiarism-definition-lesson-quiz.html>
- **Participate in class!** Contribute to discussions in class. Ask questions. Get to know your classmates. You may be able to find a good study partner!
- **Lastly, use your resources!**
 - As mentioned above, your textbook and writing handbook will be good resources for you.
 - The Academic Learning Center at CPCC offers free tutoring for all English courses. A tutor can help you with sentence structure, outlining your essay, and documenting/citing your research.
 - The CPCC library can also assist you with finding, evaluating, and using/citing information for research papers.
 - And, of course, utilize your instructor's office hours. Most instructors will gladly offer guidance and answer the questions you might have about your writing assignments. ***Please see "How to Contact Your Instructor" and "Meeting Etiquette" for more information about scheduling an appointment and visiting your instructor during office hours.***

If you have additional questions, feel free to call to speak with a STAR coach at 704-330-6754 or email star.success@cpcc.edu. Check out the rest of our tip sheets on our website <http://www.cpcc.edu/star>.

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