

Wabash Writing Statement

As a community of writers who are engaged by, grapple with, and find value in the written word, the Wabash faculty affirms that the following beliefs about writing are central to a liberal arts education. This list of beliefs represents our common ground, the ideals we share across the college and strive to communicate to our students. It is drawn from the discipline-specific characteristics of good writing articulated by our faculty.

As writers and writing teachers, we

- Believe that an important part of becoming educated in any academic discipline is learning how to be a writer in that field. This means that the writing practices of those of us in various disciplines will vary, but it also means that every discipline has writing at its core.
- Define writing as a way of thinking. Rather than a container for ideas, writing is a way to imagine and to develop ideas. We see writing as a way of deepening our students' engagement with texts, with our fellow human beings, and with the world. Writing therefore helps fulfill the college's mission of educating Wabash men to "think critically, act responsibly, lead effectively, and live humanely."
- Understand that becoming a stronger writer is a process that takes time and practice. Thus, the writing assignments we give increase in complexity across the semester and across all four years. Similarly, we understand that complex papers should be written in stages, with multiple drafts and revisions.
- Recognize that strong writing is developed and fostered by other complementary activities, including critical reading, speaking, and thinking.
- Value writing that is clear in purpose and structure so that intended readers can understand what an author is trying to say.
- Engage with primary and secondary sources, and understand why and how to weave the ideas of others into our writing effectively and in accordance with standard disciplinary citation practices. We teach our students to do the same.
- Know the importance of standard written English and have a firm grasp of proper grammar and punctuation in English and the other languages we teach at Wabash.
- Recognize the variety of genres that constitute college writing across the disciplines. Different genres of writing have different goals, audiences, tones, and structures, and we ask our students to employ appropriate genres as the situation requires.