# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WELCOME</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENTS</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESOL WRITING TUTOR PROGRAM</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Center Policies (updated 10/28/2015)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the Staff</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONVERSATION PARTNERS</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STUDY TIPS</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures: Taking Notes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Texts Quickly</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in Class Discussions Well</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Test-Taking Strategies</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Five-Paragraph Essay</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GRAMMAR TIPS</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verb Tenses</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Semicolon and the Colon</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepositions</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORMATTING AND CITATION</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formatting Papers</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) Style Citation</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WELCOME

The Office of Student Programming is very pleased to welcome you to Candler School of Theology, and we hope your time as a student here will be pleasant and successful. This handbook contains useful information to assist you during your time at Candler. You will want to read it carefully and ask any questions about parts you may not understand.

This handbook describes the English language assessment requirement and the support available if you desire assistance in improving your English language proficiency. All students for whom English is not their first language or who have been educated in English outside of North America are required to take an English assessment prior to the start of classes. This handbook briefly describes those assessments and provides an introduction to the Candler Writing Center which exists for the benefit of all Candler students. Finally, this handbook includes study and grammar tips and some suggestions on paper formatting and citation.

We encourage you to participate actively in your courses and to continue to develop your language skills. Your presence is a blessing to us and we want to help you succeed in any way we can.

Best wishes for a successful year!
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ASSESSMENTS

Candler School of Theology requires all students for whom English is not their first language or who have been educated in English outside North America to participate in assessments of both oral and written skills. The assessments are required regardless of TOEFL score, previous study in English, length of time spent in an English-speaking country, or residency status.

**Written Skills Assessment**

The written skills assessment is offered prior to the fall semester. It consists of two tasks that ask students to read a theology passage and write an essay incorporating the reading. Students who are required to but do not complete the assessment will be automatically enrolled in TESL 300: Written Communication during the fall semester. Students who do not receive a passing score on the assessment will be required to register as well. Scores will be posted and mailed to students and their advisors as soon as the scores are available. This course is offered during the fall semester.

**Oral Skills Assessment**

The oral skills assessment is offered to students early in the fall semester. This assessment, an oral proficiency interview with a trained rater, is designed to measure academic listening and speaking skills. The interview consists of three parts: warm-up questions, a read-aloud task, and questions about theology. Scores are posted as soon as available and are sent to each student and his or her faculty advisor. All students who do not receive a passing score on this exam are required to enroll in TESL 301: Oral Communication during the spring semester.

**Appeal Process for Assessment Scores**

Each student has the right to appeal the score given on either the written or oral communication skills assessment. Every attempt should be made to resolve such grievances directly with the Assistant Dean of Student Life and Spiritual Formation who may review the assessment materials and communicate with the raters. If those parties cannot achieve a satisfactory resolution, an appeal may be submitted in writing to the Assistant Dean of Student Life and Spiritual Formation. The appeal must be made within thirty days of the posting of the assessment scores. A member of the teaching faculty, using the established criteria, will then rate the student's assessment materials. The score given by this faculty rater will determine whether or not the student making the appeal will be required to enroll in the ESL course. The identity of the faculty rater will not be available to students. The determination of the faculty member will be final and will complete the appeals process.

**TESL Courses**

Both TESL courses (TESL 300 in the fall and TESL 301 in the spring) are a three-hour course. These courses are recorded on the student’s transcript. These hours do not count toward the hours required for a Candler degree program. These courses are offered only S/U and must be repeated until a grade of S is achieved, as long as the student is enrolled at Candler.

The TESL instructor is Sarah Kegley. She may be contacted at sarah.n.kegley@emory.edu. The Assistant Director of Student Life and Academic Support is Audrey Hindes. Her email is ahindes@emory.edu, and she can be found in the Office of Student
Programming in RARB 311.
ESOL WRITING TUTOR PROGRAM

Writing Center Policies (updated 12/15/2014)

Academic Skills Tutors are Candler students who are experienced writers with special training to assist international students. Tutors meet with international students in the Writing Tutor room (RARB 314) in the Office of Student Programming (RARB 311). Writing tutors are available to help any Candler international student with any Candler assignment. Also, tutors work in concert with the instructor for TESL300 and TESL301 classes to help students fulfill their required tutoring hours for those classes.

Again, these policies are in place so that the Writing Center can provide quality help to as many students as possible. Thank you for your cooperation, and please remember to be courteous and respectful of your tutors and your fellow students.

Signing Up For Appointments

Tutors hold regular tutoring hours, for which TESL students may sign up online. To access the online tutoring schedule and sign up for an appointment, please visit the Writing Center Section on the Candler Chronicle (http://candlerchronicle.com/the-candler-writing-center). Please note that you may only sign up for 1 session per week. If you are enrolled in the TESL 300 or TESL 301 class you may sign up for 3 per week. You may walk-in during the week if you need to see a tutor more than once but we cannot guarantee that a tutor will be available. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please cancel your appointment through the online form 24 hours in advance. If you fail to give advance notification of a cancelation three times in a semester, the Writing Center will temporarily suspend your use of the tutoring sessions. If the time slot you are interested in is already reserved, you may sign up on the waiting list. The writing tutor will email you in case of cancelation. Tutoring sessions will be held in the Writing Center inside the Office of Student Programming, RARB 311.

Cancellation of tutoring appointments less than noon the day prior to the appointment counts as a “no show.” Three (3) no-shows will result in a five (5) business day suspension of tutoring privileges. A tutor will notify you by e-mail. A fourth (4th) no-show results in a suspension until they have met with the director of the Writing Center.

The Tutoring Session

A student will sit with the tutor while he or she reads the paper so that mistakes can be discussed and corrected together. The tutor will check for higher-order concerns, like the thesis, flow, and organization as well as lower-order concerns like grammar, vocabulary, punctuation, and spelling (although all papers should be spell-checked on a computer). The tutor may point out an unclear sentence or paragraph and discuss with the student a way to restate the idea more clearly. The tutor will not try to correct every error but rather try to empower the student to correct his or her own errors. **Tutors do not proofread—they provide tools for students to become better writers.**

Students should be on time! If you are more than ten minutes late to your session, you will be treated as a walk-in. That means a tutor will work with you if (a) no other walk-ins arrived before you and (b) the tutor has at least 20 minutes to work with you before his or her next scheduled appointment.
Students should **come prepared** to their tutoring sessions. They must bring the paper they are working on (a paper copy is best, but a laptop is fine too) and the assignment or syllabus that contains the instructions for their paper.

At the completion of the session, the student will fill out a very brief online survey about the content of the tutoring session that day. This survey provides information for program assessment.

**Take Home Exams**

Before bringing take-home exams to the Writing Center, you must **obtain written permission** from your instructor. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the instructor and secure his or her permission. The instructor should email the Assistant Director of Student Life and Academic Support specifying the course title and whether their permission extends to the entire class or only to a specific student. We will not help with a final exam until written permission is on file. In the unlikely event that the tutor and the student are taking the same course, the tutor will arrange for the student to work with another member of the staff. Naturally, we cannot help with content for a take-home test—only organization, thesis statements, grammar, spelling, punctuation, and the like.

**Non-Academic Assignments**

Writing Center priorities focus on supporting students in their Candler assignments, but as time permits, assistance will be provided for students working on projects connected to their Candler career (e.g. applying to further graduate education, writing assignments for ordinations processes, articles for publication, cover letters, resumes, etc.).
MEET THE STAFF

Academic Skills Tutors

Larry Gipson: Larry is a third year MDiv student and an Academic Writing Tutor. Born and raised in the DC suburbs, he graduated from Yale with a BA in religious studies in 2011, before serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ukraine from 2011-14. Having lived life in a foreign language for two and a half years, Larry strives to help international students improve their English writing, learn more of American culture, and become integrated in the amazing community at Candler. He is seeking ordination in the United Church of Christ and is passionate about many things, including Christ, coffee, and CrossFit.

Isaac Horwedel: Isaac is a third year MDiv student and an Academic Skills Tutor in the Writing Center. He studied Bible and Religion, Ethics, and Peace and Conflict Transformation at Anderson University. Before coming to Candler, Isaac co-founded The Exodus House, a transitional home for substance abuse recovery. His current academic interests include the theological implications of modern technology, as well as the work of Soren Kierkegaard. He enjoys listening to stories, telling jokes, and watching the Dallas Cowboys.

Kiya Ward: Kiya is a compelling speaker and an enthusiastic leader, who has a contagious hunger for God. After teaching in higher education for six years, and balancing ministry for four of those years, Kiya has chosen to pursue full-time ministry as a second year MDiv student at Candler. As a native of North Carolina, Kiya earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies from The University of North Carolina at Greensboro and received a Master of Arts degree in Communication Studies: International Public Relations from The University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Kiya has a passion for public speaking, service, travel and interpersonal communication. When she is not in class or working, Kiya enjoys spending time with family and working out. As a self-proclaimed “foodie” she also enjoys exploring Atlanta for delicious restaurants and scrumptious bakeries!

Linda Stephan: Linda is a second year MDiv student with a MA in journalism and a 10-year career in public radio. She's been edited a lot, and done a lot of editing. She loves that process! Everyone needs an extra set of eyes to make sure we're saying what we really mean to say. Linda is a tutor, but has been known to use the Writing Center herself for a little extra help on a paper (or two). She has also worked abroad, and understands how hard it can be to say what we mean in a second language. Linda is seeking ordination in the United Methodist Church and hails from the beautiful shores of Lake Michigan. She speaks Swedish and is a fan of Bollywood and K-drama.

Kelsey Spinnato: Kelsey is a second-year MTS student and an academic skills tutor in the Writing Center. Her area of focus is history, scripture, and tradition, and she is interested most particularly in Hebrew Bible scholarship. Although a Texan through and through, Kelsey double majored in biblical languages and English (with a writing concentration) at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee. After graduating from Belmont and before continuing her studies at
Candler, Kelsey was a production editor in the Bible, Leadership, and Theology department at The United Methodist Publishing House. In her free time, Kelsey enjoys reading, watching romantic comedies, and keeping in touch with friends and family around the world.

**Assistant Director of Student Life and Academic Support**

**Audrey Hindes**: Audrey is the Assistant Director of Student Life and Academic Support in the Office of Student Programming (OSP). Audrey brings to Candler ten years of experience in theological education, both in teaching and administration. She has taught courses in biblical and religious studies, including Greek and Hebrew, at Fresno Pacific University and Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary, and she also has taught Latin and logic at The Wilberforce School in Princeton, New Jersey. Her work in theological education includes project development and management of study abroad programming, as well as experience teaching international students.

A native Californian, Audrey earned a Master of Arts in Biblical Languages at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, followed by a year of doctoral studies in Hebrew Bible at the London School of Theology. She is a chef and cooking instructor who is passionate about food, justice and hospitality, and she enjoys bringing these gifts to her work in the OSP. Audrey's primary areas of responsibility in the OSP include academic support, international student support, and student international exchanges. Audrey's office is CST 318. She has wonderful tea brewing every afternoon, so drop by and say hello!

**ESL Instructor**

**Sarah Kegley**: Sarah is the Instructor of the Theology English as a Second Language courses in writing and speaking/listening. Sarah is currently the Director of the ESL Credit Program at Georgia State University and considers herself both an Applied Linguist and an interculturalist.

While Sarah's teaching career began in the public schools, in 1999, she began teaching International students at Georgia State University, in both undergraduate and graduate ESL writing programs. In addition, Sarah lived for 5 years in Madrid, Spain, where she directed the American Language and Culture Program for the International Institute in Spain, a historical intercultural center which was founded to foster relations between the US and Spain. She later took on the role of Director of Student Life at Saint Louis University's Madrid Campus before moving back to Atlanta in 2009.

Sarah grew up in the "highlands" of Virginia, and now lives in Atlanta's Virginia-Highlands neighborhood. In her free time, she loves to read and write; she is currently writing a memoir of her time in Spain. Sarah considers any day that she gets to walk the dog for two hours, and later read on the sofa with the cats, a very good day.
Writing Center Director/ADVANCE Instructor

Ryan Kuratko: Ryan is entering his fifth year of a PhD in the Graduate Division of Religion at Emory University. His research centers on the intersection between Christian contemplative styles of theology and practice, and more traditional systematic approaches to theology. Ryan is an ordained Episcopal priest and served six years in congregations in Virginia and Texas before beginning his doctoral work. His wife Lauren is also ordained, and they are enjoying time with their two boys, Wystan and Simeon.
CONVERSATION PARTNERS

In addition to classes, assessments, and tutoring, ESOL students at Candler have the opportunity to take part in the Conversation Partners (CP) program. The objectives of the CP program include the following:
1. Provide an opportunity to practice one-on-one intercultural interaction with a person from another culture.
2. Provide a personal source of information about another culture and work against ethnocentrism.
3. Have an opportunity to practice informal oral English.
4. Have a cultural guide to U.S. and Candler practices.

In this program, you will get to know an individual from another culture through meeting regularly to discuss a variety of topics. Ideally, it would be good for you to meet with your CP once a week. At times, CPs have visited each other’s homes, gone together to sporting events, etc. It is not a requirement that you meet with each other off-campus, but if you feel comfortable and both your schedules allow it, it might be nice to meet for lunch or get a coffee together on a Saturday afternoon, etc.

Students enrolled in TESL 301 in the spring can use some of the hours from their CP sessions to count toward their 20-hour tutoring requirement. Please refer to the TESL 301 syllabus for details.

The TESL instructor will provide information on signing up for the CP program, but for more information, email candlerosp@emory.edu or stop by the Office of Student Programming.
STUDY TIPS

Lectures: Taking Notes

The point of taking notes is not to have a copy of what the professor told you—you are not going to be able to write down everything he or she says. Effective listening is active, as opposed to simply hearing, which is passive. Here are some tips on how to take good notes.

- In class:
  - Write down the notes (obviously). This way, you're already beginning to process information.
  - Use tape recorder with permission from the person being recorded. Always take notes, use tape recorder to clarify, correct, or confirm your notes.
  - Pay attention to the speaker. If you can, write without looking at the page.
  - Minimize distractions.
  - Recognize when your mind wanders and bring it back.
  - Watch for clues from professor, such as tone of voice, volume, pauses, body language, writing on the board, and key words.
  - Color coding, correct spelling and finished sentences are impressive but not necessary.
  - Maintain a sense of the overall topic of each lecture and note general themes.
  - Write down key terms with brief definitions and explanations, when possible.
  - Develop your own shorthand. Abbreviate repeated terms, use signs/symbols for commonly written words (such as θ for theology and γ for scripture, etc.), chart/diagram, keep anecdotes and examples brief.
  - Number your pages.
  - Take notes only on one side of the paper, and use the other side for study comments.
  - Get used to a professor’s (good or poor) lecturing skills.

- Outside of class:
  - Reread your notes.
  - Ask questions to your peers or even to yourself about what you have written.
  - Give commentary on your notes on the margins and on the back of the paper.
  - Go to other sources, e.g., your friends’ notes, textbooks, and reference books.
  - Fill in your notes with more information that you may have missed the first time but remember in your mind.
  - Make connections with other lectures.
Reading Texts Quickly

- Make a list of all readings for the week every week.
- Prioritize the list. Yes, this means that you are not going to read everything with the same diligence.
- Skim the texts.
  - Read selectively, not merely at a fast pace.
  - Read introductions, conclusions, and summary paragraphs.
  - Read first and last lines of the paragraph and sometimes all of it.
  - Look at illustrations, diagrams, and charts.
  - Read all words and phrases that are set in **boldface** or *italics*. Look up words that you do not know.
  - Write in the book if you own it (in the margins, after the chapter, or at the end of the book). Do not write in library books or books borrowed from others.
  - Take notes while reading.

Participating in Class Discussions Well

Candler professors place significant weight on your participation in and contribution to in-class discussion. It is really hard to process information that comes from the teacher and different students (who speak with different accents) all at once. Fortunately, good participation does not depend on how often and how long you talk. Good participation means how deep and thoughtful your comments are. Your best help is your diligence in reading what is assigned.

Prepare for discussion in advance. When you take reading notes, construct the argument and identify the thesis, main ideas, and key terms. Memorize those—it will help you not only to participate in the discussion but will make it easier to prepare for the test at the end of the semester. Choose one or two ideas and think how they may relate to the overall theme or goal of the course or the topic of the class. Prepare one or two questions for the reading that will clarify your understanding of the author or challenge the author’s position.

Listen well, take notes as you are able, and notice which points the teacher emphasizes. After the class, try to briefly summarize what was discussion about.

Test-Taking Strategies

Before the test:
- Stay up-to-date on assignments. Learn material and review as you go along.
- Make sure you understand the information as you are learning it. That way, you won’t have to re-learn it or have to cram a great deal of information at one time.
- Read and study information in meaningful chunks (by chapters or units) so that you’ll be able to mentally store and retrieve information easily.
- Get the big picture! Ask about the test -- find out what information will be stressed and the kinds of questions that will be asked. Go over your text and lecture notes to develop a study strategy. Map or outline the course contents if you haven't done so previously.
- Create master lists, note cards, or other tools for learning key terms, general themes,
concepts, etc.

- Break study sessions into manageable time segments and meaningful units. You'll remember more if you study for short periods of time (45 minutes to 1 hour) and over a longer period of time (1–2 weeks) than if you cram all your study into a single session the night before the test.
- Practice answering essay questions before the test. Use cognitive questions at all levels to assure learning and ability to answer essay questions. For example, how would you describe, compare/contrast, predict, classify, apply, evaluate, prioritize, etc.?
- Use mnemonic techniques to memorize lists, definitions, and other specific kinds of information.
- Form a study group with other students in your class to discuss and quiz each other on important material. This will add other perspectives and help to complete your study if you tend to be either a detail-oriented or big-picture-oriented learner.
- Maintain healthy living habits. Get a good night's sleep before the test.

During the Test:

- Get a good seat.
- Avoid getting caught up in other students' test anxieties.
- Get the big picture -- survey the entire test before you answer any questions. This will help you to get an overview of what's expected and to strategize how you will take the test.
- Take a few deep breaths to relax tense muscles. Repeat this process throughout the test.
- Read directions carefully. Ask questions if you don't understand or need clarification.
- Do a quick “mind dump” of information you don't want to forget. Write it down on scrap paper or in the margins.
- Answer the easiest questions first. Matching questions are often good to start with because they provide a reminder of important terms and definitions.
- Use good strategies for answering multiple choice and other objective questions.
  - Look for the central idea of each question. What is the main point?
  - Try to supply your own answer before choosing an alternative listed on the test.
  - Mark an answer for every question.
- When answering essay questions, remember that the objective is to demonstrate how well you can explain and support an idea, not just what you know. Keep the following in mind:
  - Read over all the essay questions before you start to write. Underline keywords like “define,” “compare,” “explain,” etc.
  - Think before you write. Remember, a good answer:
    - starts with a direct response to the question,
    - mentions the topics or areas described in the question,
    - provides specific as well as general information, and
    - use the technical vocabulary of the course.
  - Pay attention to and respond to each part of the prompt. Even if what you wrote is correct, if you don’t respond to all parts of the prompt you will be marked down.
  - Then map or outline the main points you want to make, determine the
order in which you want to write your points, determine the support you
want to add, then write.
  ▪ Write legibly. Leave some space so you can add to your answer later.
  ▪ Proofread your essay. Check for grammar, punctuation, spelling, etc.
  o Keep an eye on the clock. Make sure you'll have time to complete the test sections that
have the highest value, if not the entire test. Take short breather breaks, but do not look
around.

After the test:
  o When you receive your test paper, go over it to determine areas of strength and weakness
in your test-taking skills. If you have done poorly, learn from your mistakes! Always
analyze your tests to determine how you can improve future test results.

The Five-Paragraph Essay¹

An essay is a literary composition that expresses a certain idea, claim, or concept and
backs it up with supporting statements. It will follow a logical pattern, to include an introductory
paragraph (including the claim), a body (support), and a conclusion (summary and implications).
This brief guide presents a common structure for essays. The five-paragraph essay is a
common form that most American students learn in high school. Its organization and contents
appear as follows.

1. Introduction: The introduction is the first paragraph in your essay, and it should
accomplish a few specific goals:
  a. Capture the reader's interest. It's a good idea to start your essay with a really
interesting statement, in order to pique the reader's interest.
    i. Avoid starting out with a boring line like, In this essay I will explain why
Rosa Parks was an important figure.
    ii. Instead, try something like, A Michigan museum recently paid $492,000
for an old, dilapidated bus from Montgomery, Alabama. This encourages
most people to keep on reading.
  b. Introduce the topic. The next few sentences should explain your first statement,
and prepare the reader for your thesis statement.
    i. The old yellow bus was reported to be the very one that sparked the civil
rights movement, when a young woman named Rosa Parks.
  c. Make a claim in a thesis sentence. Your thesis sentence should provide your
specific assertion and convey clearly your point of view. It will likely be the last
sentence of the introductory paragraph, and it is the most important sentence in
the essay. Every other paragraph and sentence serves to enforce or prove this
point.

¹ This material, with some minor editing and a few changes, comes from Grace Fleming, “How To Write a
i. In refusing to surrender her seat to a white man, Rosa Parks inspired a courageous freedom movement that lives on, even today.

2. **Body:** The body of the essay will include three paragraphs, each limited to one main idea that supports your thesis. You should state your idea, then back it up with two or three sentences of evidence or examples.
   a. **Topic sentence:** Each body paragraph begins with a topic sentence that both looks back to the thesis and introduces the main idea of that paragraph.
      i. *It took incredible courage for an African American woman to make such a bold stance in 1955 Alabama.*
   b. **Evidence:** For every point you make, offer evidence to support it. Evidence can include citations but will mostly be your own explanations.
      i. *This act took place in an era when African Americans could be arrested and face severe retribution for committing the most trivial acts of defiance.*
   c. **Transitions:** Include a few more supporting statements with further evidence, then use transition words to lead to the following paragraph.
      i. Sample transition words include *moreover, in fact, on the whole, furthermore, as a result, simply put, for this reason, similarly, likewise, it follows that, naturally, by comparison, surely,* and *yet.*

3. **Conclusion:** The conclusion need not follow one specific form, but it must include some summary with no new information, and the implications of your findings.
   a. **Summary:** The fifth and final paragraph will summarize your main points and re-assert your main claim. It should point out your main points, but should not repeat specific examples.
   b. **No new information:** New information is best served by appearing in the body paragraphs. The conclusion does not need additional evidence but rather a summary of the evidence that has already been presented.
   c. **Implications:** A conclusion with just summary is boring. In addition to summary, answer some questions like, What are the implications of your thesis? Why does it matter? What can the reader do with your claim? What opportunities for further research are there? What further questions does your thesis raise that you did not have time to answer?

Once you complete the first draft of your essay, it's a good idea to re-visit the thesis statement in your first paragraph. Read your essay to see if it flows well. You might find that the supporting paragraphs are strong, but they don't address the exact focus of your thesis. Simply re-write your thesis sentence to fit your body and summary more exactly. By doing this, you will ensure that every sentence in your essay supports, proves, or reflects your thesis.

This is certainly not the only type of essay a student will write or a tutor will see at Candler. A tutor should be prepared to work with statements of purpose for applications, résumés, research papers, and speeches, but two- to three-page papers are a very common assignment, so familiarity with this structure is important.
Developing a Strong Thesis

The most important sentence in any paper will be the thesis. Any good paper has a good thesis, which needs to be both debatable and narrow, and a good thesis can take a number of different forms.

The Thesis Statement or Main Claim Must Be Debatable

An argumentative or persuasive piece of writing must begin with a debatable thesis or claim. In other words, the thesis must be something that people could reasonably have differing opinions on. If your thesis is something that is generally agreed upon or accepted as fact then there is no reason to try to persuade people. An example of a non-debatable thesis statement is:

*Pollution is bad for the environment.*

This thesis statement is not debatable. First, the word pollution means that something is bad or negative in some way. Further, all studies agree that pollution is a problem; they simply disagree on the impact it will have or the scope of the problem. No one could reasonably argue that pollution is good. An example of a debatable thesis statement is:

*At least twenty-five percent of the federal budget should be spent on limiting pollution.*

This is an example of a debatable thesis because reasonable people could disagree with it. Some people might think that this is how we should spend the nation's money. Others might feel that we should be spending more money on education. Still others could argue that corporations, not the government, should be paying to limit pollution. Another example of a debatable thesis statement is:

*America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars.*

In this example there is also room for disagreement between rational individuals. Some citizens might think focusing on recycling programs rather than private automobiles is the most effective strategy.

The Thesis Needs To Be Narrow

Although the scope of your paper might seem overwhelming at the start, generally the narrower the thesis the more effective your argument will be. Your thesis or claim must be

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supported by evidence. The broader your claim is, the more evidence you will need to convince readers that your position is right. An example of a thesis that is too broad might be

*Drug use is detrimental to society.*

There are several reasons this statement is too broad to argue. First, what is included in the category “drugs”? Is the author talking about illegal drug use, recreational drug use (which might include alcohol and cigarettes), or all uses of medication in general? Second, in what ways are drugs detrimental? Is drug use causing deaths (and is the author equating deaths from overdoses and deaths from drug related violence)? Is drug use changing the moral climate or causing the economy to decline? Finally, what does the author mean by “society”? Is the author referring only to America or to the global population? Does the author make any distinction between the effects on children and adults? There are just too many questions that the claim leaves open. The author could not cover all of the topics listed above, yet the generality of the claim leaves all of these possibilities open to debate. A more narrow or focused thesis might be:

*Illegal drug use is detrimental because it encourages gang violence.*

In this example the topic of drugs has been narrowed down to illegal drugs and the detriment has been narrowed down to gang violence. This is a much more manageable topic.

A student could narrow each debatable thesis from the previous examples in the following way:

*At least twenty-five percent of the federal budget should be spent on helping upgrade business to clean technologies, researching renewable energy sources, and planting more trees in order to control or eliminate pollution.*

This thesis narrows the scope of the argument by specifying not just the amount of money used but also how the money could actually help to control pollution. Another option might be:

*America's anti-pollution efforts should focus on privately owned cars because it would allow most citizens to contribute to national efforts and care about the outcome.*

This thesis narrows the scope of the argument by specifying not just what the focus of a national anti-pollution campaign should be but also why this is the appropriate focus. Qualifiers such as “typically,” “generally,” “usually,” or “on average” also help to limit the scope of your claim by allowing for the almost inevitable exception to the rule.

**Types of Claims**

Claims typically fall into one of four categories. Thinking about how you want to approach your topic, in other words what type of claim you want to make, is one way to focus your thesis on one particular aspect of you broader topic.
• Claims of fact or definition: These claims argue about what the definition of something is or whether something is a settled fact. Example: *What some people refer to as global warming is actually nothing more than normal, long-term cycles of climate change.*

• Claims of cause and effect: These claims argue that one person, thing, or event caused another thing or event to occur. Example: *The popularity of SUVs in America has caused pollution to increase.*

• Claims about value: These are claims made about what something is worth, whether we value it or not, how we would rate or categorize something. Example: *Global warming is the most pressing challenge facing the world today.*

• Claims about solutions or policies: These are claims that argue for or against a certain solution or policy approach to a problem. Example: *Instead of drilling for oil in Alaska we should be focusing on ways to reduce oil consumption, such as researching renewable energy sources.*

Which type of claim is right for your argument? Which type of thesis or claim you use for your argument will depend on your position and knowledge on the topic, your audience, and the context of your paper. You might want to think about where you imagine your audience to be on this topic and pinpoint where you think the biggest difference in viewpoints might be. Even if you start with one type of claim you probably will be using several within the paper. Regardless of the type of claim you choose to utilize it is key to identify the controversy or debate you are addressing and to define your position early on in the paper!
GRAMMAR TIPS

Verb Tenses

Past Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>present perfect (used for indefinite past time meanings, especially in introductory statements; indicates that an action is completed but has continuing effects in the present time)</td>
<td>They have been there before.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple past tense (describes actions or activities that began and ended in the past)</td>
<td>I quit smoking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past perfect (describes actions or activities that were completed before another action or activity in the past)</td>
<td>The runner had started before the gun sounded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>past progressive (describes actions or activities that happened at the same time in the past; the past progressive is rarely used in simple sentences; it is usually used in contrast with another verb in a complex sentence)</td>
<td>She was waiting for winter to come, when suddenly snow appeared.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

General Truth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>simple present</td>
<td>It is Thursday.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Present Time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>present progressive (describes actions or situations in progress at the moment of speaking)</td>
<td>I am running out of time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple present</td>
<td>I go to school every day.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Future Time

---

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tense</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>modals (especially will)</td>
<td><em>I will go tomorrow.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>We might go to a movie after the exam.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>be going to</em> + verb</td>
<td><em>We are going to have a party on Saturday.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>simple present (used for scheduled events; verbs often used include <em>arrive, be, begin, close, end, leave, open,</em> and <em>start</em>)</td>
<td><em>The test is on Friday.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present progressive (a time word is usually used to make the future time meaning clear)</td>
<td><em>They are buying a new car tomorrow.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The Semicolon and the Colon**

The semicolon is used to separate major sentence elements of equal grammatical rank. The colon is used primarily to call attention to the words that follow it.

**Uses of the Semicolon**

- Between closely related independent clauses not joined with a coordinating conjunction.
  - When related independent clauses appear in one sentence, they are ordinarily connected with a comma and a coordinating conjunction (*and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet*). The conjunction expresses the relation between the clauses. If the relation is clear without the conjunction, a writer may choose to connect the clauses with a semicolon instead.
    - "*Injustice is relatively easy to bear; what stings is justice.*" —H. L. Mencken
  - A semicolon must be used whenever a coordinating conjunction has been omitted between independent clauses. To use merely a comma creates a kind of run-on sentence known as a comma splice.
    - *In 1800, travelers needed six weeks to get from New York City to Chicago; in 1860, the trip by railroad took two days.*

- Between independent clauses linked with a transitional expression.
  - When a transitional expression appears between independent clauses, it is preceded by a semicolon and usually followed by a comma.
    - *Many corals grow very gradually; however, the creation of a coral reef can take centuries.*
  - When a transitional expression appears in the middle or at the end of the second independent clause, the semicolon goes between the clauses.
    - *Most singers gain fame through hard work and dedication; Evita, however, found other means.*

- Between items in a series containing internal punctuation.
  - *The best science fiction sagas are Star Trek, with Mr. Spock and his large pointed ears; Battlestar Galactica, with its Cylons; and Star Wars, with Han Solo, Luke Skywalker, and Darth Vader.*
Common Misuses of the Semicolon

- Between a subordinate clause and the rest of the sentence.
  - *Unless you brush your teeth within ten or fifteen minutes after eating; brushing does almost no good. (use comma instead)

- Between an appositive and the word it refers to.
  - *Another delicious dish is the chef’s special; a roasted duck rubbed with spices and stuffed with wild rice. (use comma instead)

- To introduce a list.
  - *All my favorite film stars have Websites; John Travolta, Susan Sarandon, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Emma Thompson. (use colon instead)

- Between independent clauses joined by and, but, or, nor, for, so, or yet.
  - *Five of the applicants had worked with spreadsheets; but only one was familiar with database management. (use comma instead)

Uses of the Colon

- After an independent clause to direct attention to a list, an appositive, or a quotation
  - The daily routine should include at least the following: twenty knee bends, fifty sit-ups, fifteen leg lifts, and five minutes of running in place.
  - My roommate is guilty of two of the seven deadly sins: gluttony and sloth.
  - Consider the words of John F. Kennedy: “Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country.”

- Between independent clauses if the second summarizes or explains the first.
  - Faith is like love: it cannot be forced.

- After the salutation in a formal letter, to indicate hours and minutes, to show proportions, between a title and subtitle, and to separate city from publisher and date in bibliographic entries.
  - Dear Sir or Madam:
  - 5:30 P.M.
  - The ratio of women to men was 2:1.
  - The Glory of Hera: Greek Mythology and the Greek Family
  - Boston: Medford, 1999

Common Misuses of the Colon

- Between a verb and its object of complement.
  - *Some important vitamins and minerals found in vegetables are: vitamin A, thiamine, niacin, iron, potassium, folate, and vitamin C. (omit colon instead)

- Between a preposition and its object.
  - *The heart's two pumps each consist of: an upper chamber, of atrium, and a lower chamber, of ventricle. (omit colon instead)
• After such as, including, or for example.
  o *The trees on our campus include many fine Japanese specimens, such as: black pines, ginkgoes, weeping cherries, and cutleaf maples. (omit colon instead)

Prepositions

One Point in Time

To express a single point in time, English uses on, at, and in.
• On is used with days.
  o I will see you on Monday.
  o The week begins on Sunday.
• At is used with noon, night, midnight, and with the time of day.
  o My plane leaves at noon.
  o The movie starts at 6 p.m.
• In is used with other parts of the day, with months, with years, with seasons.
  o He likes to read in the afternoon.
  o The days are long in August.
  o The book was published in 1999.
  o The flowers will bloom in spring.

Extended Time

To express extended time, English uses the following prepositions: since, for, by, from-to, from-until, during, in, within
• She has been gone since yesterday. (She left yesterday and has not returned.)
• I'm going to Paris for two weeks. (I will spend two weeks there.)
• The movie showed from August to October. (Beginning in August and ending in October.)
• The decorations were up from spring until fall. (Beginning in spring and ending in fall.)
• I watch TV during the evening. (For some period of time in the evening.)
• We must finish the project within a year. (No longer than a year.)

Place

To express notions of place, English uses the following prepositions: to talk about the point itself, in; to express something contained, inside; to talk about the surface, on; and to talk about a general vicinity, at.
• There is a wasp in the room.
• Put the present inside the box.
• I left your keys on the table.
• She was waiting at the corner.
To express notions of an object being higher than a point, English uses the following prepositions: *over, above*.

- *He threw the ball over the roof.*
- *Hang that picture above the couch.*

**Lower Than a Point**

To express notions of an object being lower than a point, English uses the following prepositions: *under, underneath, beneath, below*.

- *The rabbit burrowed under the ground.*
- *The child hid underneath the blanket.*
- *We relaxed in the shade beneath the branches.*
- *The valley is below sea level.*

**Close to a Point**

To express notions of an object being close to a point, English uses the following prepositions: *near, by, next to, between, among, opposite*.

- *She lives near the school.*
- *There is an ice cream shop by the store.*
- *An oak tree grows next to my house.*
- *The house is between Elm Street and Maple Street.*
- *I found my pen lying among the books.*
- *The bathroom is opposite that room.*

**To Introduce Objects of Verbs**

English uses these prepositions to introduce objects of the following verbs.

- **At**: glance, laugh, look, rejoice, smile, stare
  - *She took a quick glance at her reflection.* (Exception with mirror: *She took a quick glance in the mirror.*)
  - *You didn't laugh at his joke.*
  - *I'm looking at the computer monitor.*
  - *We rejoiced at his safe rescue.*
  - *That pretty girl smiled at you.*
  - *Stop staring at me.*

- **Of**: approve, consist, smell
  - *I don't approve of his speech.*
  - *My contribution to the article consists of many pages.*
  - *He came home smelling of alcohol.*

- **Of (or about)**: dream, think
  - *I dream of finishing college in four years.*
  - *Can you think of a number between one and ten?*
I am thinking about this problem.

- For: call, hope, look, wait, watch, wish
  - Did someone call for a taxi?
  - He hopes for a raise in salary next year.
  - I'm looking for my keys.
  - We'll wait for her here.
  - You go buy the tickets and I'll watch for the train.
  - If you wish for an “A” in this class, you must work hard.

To as a Preposition

The word to has two important grammatical functions. To is used to make infinitives (He likes to read). To is also used as a preposition (He went to the store). To is used as a preposition with certain frequently used phrases such as be accustomed to, be used to, be opposed to, get used to, look forward to, and object to. Of the following examples, the first two are correct, but the third example is wrong because to is used as a preposition and must be followed by a noun or gerund.

- I am looking forward to the party.
- I am looking forward to going to the party.
- *I am looking forward to go to the party.

Articles

To determine when to use or not to use an article in a sentence, it is helpful to know noun types and meanings. A noun may be either common or proper, and it may be indefinite (a/an), definite (the), or generic (Ø). An indefinite noun refers to unknown or nonspecific information. A definite noun refers to known or specific information. A generic noun refers to universally known information.

Count vs. Non-Count Nouns

Some nouns can be made plural; these nouns are called count nouns. Nouns that cannot be made plural are called non-count nouns. To determine whether a noun is a count or non-count noun, place a or some in front of it in a phrase. Some nouns can be both count and non-count

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4 The material in this section has been adapted from Byrd and Benson, *Applied English Grammar*, 203–210.

nouns.

- *I have a tiger/some tigers.* (count—it can be made plural)
- *I have a relationship/some relationships.* (count—it can be made plural)
- *I have a pleasure/some pleasures that I am unwilling to give up.* (count and non-count—it can be made plural in limited situations)
- *I have a happiness/some happinesses.* (non-count—it cannot be made plural)

Non-count items can include

- things that come in very small pieces (*rice, salt, sand*)
- wholes made up of similar parts (*food, furniture, luggage*)
- names of subjects of study (*ESL, biology, mathematics*)
- abstractions (*happiness, justice, luck*)
- liquids/fluids (*blood, milk, water*)
- solids/minerals (*gold, ice, mercury*)
- sports/types of recreation (*chess, tennis, soccer*)
- natural phenomena (*dew, rain, snow*)
- diseases (*measles, mumps, smallpox*)

Singular count nouns must always have a determiner, such as an article. For generic meaning, non-count nouns never have an article or a determiner

### The Indefinite Article

Use *a/an* for

- indefinite singular count nouns
  - *I met a musician at the concert.* (This indefinite usage is often used to introduce a topic. Subsequent references to this musician will likely use the definite article.)
- generic singular count nouns
  - *My mother is a teacher.*

It is important to note that *a* is used before consonant sounds and *an* before vowel sounds (*an apple, a book, a university, an honor*).

### The Zero Article (Ø)

Use no article for

- most proper nouns (which are definite in meaning)
  - *He lives in Alaska.*
- generic plural count nouns
  - *Tigers are both beautiful and dangerous.*
- non-count nouns
  - *Rice should be cooked before it is eaten.*

### The Definite Article
Use the for
- subsequent mentions
  - *I bought a new dress. . . The new dress I have is blue.*
- superlatives
  - *He is the best doctor in the world.*
- specifiers (*same, sole, only, chief, principal*)
  - *The same research was cited repeatedly throughout the conference.*
- shared/common knowledge or unique reference
  - *The sun is blinding.*
- of phrases
  - *Moses had faith. . . The faith of Moses was strong.*
- partitive phrases
  - *Some of the people were affected by the smoke.*
- names of theories, effects, devices, scales and some other names
  - *The theory of relativity is important.*
FORMATTING AND CITATION

Formatting Papers

Students should format their papers using a style guide. Most style guides require papers to be double-spaced in 12-point Times (or another serif font). All margins should be set at 1 inch. Paragraphs should be indented ½ inch, and there should be no extra spacing between paragraphs. Style guides do not have a consistent format for name or date placement, so the student should choose one style guide and use that. If the professor allows, student may print essays on both sides of the paper in order to save paper. Essays should be printed clearly in black ink on letter-size (8½" × 11") white paper. Finally, always proofread it before handing it in.

Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) Style Citation

Most professors at Candler prefer SBL,6 Chicago,7 or Turabian8 style for paper formatting and citations. These are mostly the same, but SBL has some adaptations for the field of biblical studies. The best method is to use SBL wherever possible and consult Chicago or Turabian for what SBL does not address. Here are some samples of commonly cited sources. In addition to the full handbook of style, SBL has also published a shorter guide for students,9 which is available online for free.

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Book by a Single Author


Book by Two or Three Authors


Book by More Than Three Authors


9 Scott et al., *Reading New Testament Greek*, 42.


Translated Book


Book With One Editor


**Book with Both Author and Editor**


**Article in an Edited Volume**


**Multi-Volume Work**


**Journal Article**


Unpublished Dissertation or Thesis


Encyclopedia or Dictionary Article


BIBLIOGRAPHY


