

A Basic Unit Plan

Keep the arc of the semester in mind as you build your course. Each unit should build toward the next unit, and all units should be working to help students achieve the course goals.

Each unit within the semester should also have an arc that builds toward the completion of that unit's essay or major assignment.

A basic unit plan is as follows:

- Introduce the essay assignment—give the assignment sheet and rubric, have students read and summarize the assignment and ask any questions they have about it, have students read the corresponding chapter in their rhetoric, have students read a text that the whole class will use to model the essay's construction (this model text may be provided in the rhetoric chapter).
- Work with the model text—using the model text, show students how to use a text to write their individual essays. They can practice source usage skills before they have to work with their actual text. Students might also evaluate the model text with the assignment rubric.
- Have students work with their source text(s). They can practice critical/active reading techniques, get into groups to check each other's summary skills, practice paraphrasing and quoting from their text, come up with questions about their text, relate their text to other texts and personal experiences.
- Have students do process writing – freewrite, brainstorm, mindmap, or cluster to generate the raw material for student papers.
- Have students draft thesis statements and workshop them in class.
- Have students draft other parts of the paper—introduction, conclusion, body paragraphs, transition sentences—and work with them in class.
- Give style and grammar lessons as needed. As you look at thesis statements, in-class writing, and drafts, you'll see issues that need to be addressed. Common issues are parallelism, vague pronouns, comma usage, semicolon usage, incorrect word choice, lack of sentence variety, lack of paragraph cohesion.
- Workshop student drafts looking for higher-order concerns (content and organization).
- Workshop student drafts looking for lower-order concerns (surface issues—grammar, punctuation, style).
- Final paper is due.
- Have students do some kind of reflection on their essay writing experience. Have students reflect on or respond to their grading comments (especially important for getting students to read comments in Turnitin).