

# Preparatory College Composition

Preparatory College Composition is a **writing intensive, performance-based** composition course. It is designed to make students competent, strategic writers who can respond appropriately to writing situations, including timed writing situations, that students typically encounter in courses across the curriculum in their first semester of college.

## How does Preparatory College Composition differ from AP English?

AP Literature and Composition and AP Language and Composition programs are intended to be the equivalent of a college-level English class. **PrepColComp does not replace college English**, but prepares students to take college it and to write in other college classes.

In PrepColComp, **all the reading and writing is nonfiction. Each deals with some aspect of communication**, including oral, written, and nonverbal communication.

## Course admission & suitability

**Maturity** rather than age is the chief consideration for admission: the course is demanding. Students take a timed writing test before they are admitted. The test is not so much to see how well they write as for them to see if they are ready for the demands of college level work.

Students who plan to take an AP English course or community college English as a senior could take PrepColComp in 10th or 11th grade. Students with minimal literary interests could take PrepColComp as their 12th grade English course.

## Course guarantee: competence

If I accept a student into PrepColComp, I guarantee to turn that student into a competent writer *providing the student does his or her part*. My definition of *competent* and what students must do are listed in the course syllabus. In general, students must

- Take an active role in their education.
- Attend classes regularly and on time.
- Do their homework so they are prepared to participate in class.
- Turn in work by its deadline.

If a student follows the directions laid out in the syllabus and fail to achieve competence as defined in the syllabus by the end of unit 2, I will keep teaching that student *at no additional charge* until the student achieves competence (or I collapse from exhaustion.)

## Home school credits

Students who complete PrepColComp will have as much writing experience as students who complete a typical first-year college English course; however, they will not have written a lengthy research paper.

I suggest home school parents count unit 1 of PrepColComp as a year of high school English. I suggest they have their student do a research paper in addition to unit 2 and count the combined work as a second year of high school English. I recommend students write a research paper for a course that interests them and submit it for a grade in that course.

## Instructional delivery

Preparatory College Composition is a hybrid distance learning course with live, instructor-led class classes and online forums for discussions between live sessions. The synchronous class sessions allow two-way audio, text-based discussion, video and graphic displays. The sessions are archived and may be reviewed.

## Instructional overview

The two-unit core instructional component includes:

- 60 live online 50-minute classes.
- Evaluation of and feedback on 11 essay plans.
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- Feedback on homework and informal writing assignments.
- Supervision and informal instruction at the course forum
- Directing students' course portfolio development.
- Assignment of a course grade.

**On-time attendance at real-time classes is required.** Students may participate in class forums at their convenience provided they meet the stated deadlines for submitting work. **Late work** will not be accepted for credit toward the competence standard or final grade.

For every hour of class time, students should expect to spend two hours outside of class reading and writing to get ready for class, just as they would in a college course. In other words, students should be willing to invest up to **9 hours a week** in work for this course.

Essays for the class will typically be in the **400- to 800-word range**.

Unit 1 focuses on **planning** persuasive-pattern essays with an eye to becoming efficient writers. Unit 1 is structured with **three class sessions a week**, one of which may be a writing session.

Students will complete five essays in unit 1. They will also identify three errors to eliminate from their writing by the end of the course as part of the criteria for demonstrating competence. Students will begin learning **editing techniques** for identifying and correcting their own errors.

Unit 2 focuses on **adapting the persuasive essay template** to common nonfiction patterns, such as comparison and contrast essays and argument writing. Unit 2 is structured with **three class sessions a week, one of which is used for composing (drafting)** a previously planned essay. Later students **revise and edit** those drafts. Students should achieve writing competence by the end of Unit 2.

**Unit 3 is an optional add-on.** Students who do their work as assigned but don't achieve competence by the end of unit 2 take the unit at no additional cost. Other students may take unit at extra charge to raise their course grade, expand their skills in some particular area, or study a topic touched on in class. Unit 3 will be structured as individual or small-group tutorials.

## Required materials

Most of the required reading will be available online. I may assign reading in mass market books that are readily available through libraries and used book outlets. I will give ample notice so you can borrow material rather than purchasing. It is helpful for students to have access to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 7<sup>th</sup> edition, but not required.

## Required equipment

The live sessions will be held at [WizIQ.com](http://WizIQ.com). Students need a free WizIQ account and

- Computer with Internet access (preferably high speed) and enough memory that they can keep a text editor (like Notepad) open during online sessions
- Speakers and microphone
- Keyboard
- E-mail account they check regularly

## Grading

The **course goal** is for all students to **become competent** writers. **I grade on the "three in a row" principle.** Competence and final grades are determined by the highest grade students earn on three consecutive essays.

When they achieve competence, students **earn a C** for the course. Even if they goof off after achieving competence, they still get their C. Competent writers can earn A's or B's with a little more practice or slightly more effort.

Although this course isn't intended to replace college English, competent writers have *possibility* of testing out of at least first semester college English through

- Their college's own testing program,
- Showing their portfolios
- An independently evaluated test, like the CLEP.

## Class size

The minimum enrollment is 10; maximum enrollment for the fall cohort is 20.

## Tuition and fees

For the 2009-2010 school year, tuition for the **Preparatory College Composition** course units 1 and 2 is \$1,200.

There is an **application fee of \$25**, which covers the evaluation of the timed writing.

**A deposit of \$150** is required by Aug. 15 to hold a student's place for fall. The deposit will be refunded if the student withdraws prior to the first class meeting. Class payments go through [PayPal.com](http://PayPal.com).



## Payment options

You have three ways you may choose to pay for the course:

**Option A:** Make a single payment, save 4%.

**Option B:** Pay in two installments, save 2%.

**Option C:** Pay \$42 each week in which classes are held.

Details on the payment plans, including refund policies and due dates, at the close of the enrollment period

## Class sessions

When students apply for the course, they vote for the **time slot** they would prefer; majority vote wins.

Classes **in fall term** are scheduled on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Classes in **spring term** are scheduled on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays, with the Tuesday sessions being reserved for drafting essays.

## Important dates

- Last day to apply: June 8.
- Timed writing sample: complete & submit between June 15 and June 30.
- Acceptances for the fall cohort e-mailed by July 11.
- Deposit for fall course due Aug. 15