

CENTER FOR TALENTED YOUTH
CTYOnline

**Instructor Handbook
for
Web-based Courses**

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY

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INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the Center for Talented Youth (CTY)! You are part of an organization that has been identifying and nurturing academically talented youth since 1979. *CTYOnline* is one of several programs that CTY provides to these exceptional students. *CTYOnline* combines the freedom to work from anywhere with appropriately challenging curricula, expert instructors, and a community of like-minded learners.

CTYOnline was created in 1983 with assistance from the National Endowment for the Humanities. It offers a variety of short language arts courses and a five-course writing series. In the short language arts courses, students study the relationship of reading and grammar to good writing. In the writing series, they practice the process of writing as they compose essays, poetry and fiction. Student work is evaluated by writers who are also experienced teachers.

INSTRUCTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

As an instructor, your primary role is to carefully and honestly critique student writing, offering advice for revision. Instructors of the reading courses should also encourage critical reading and critical thinking skills. Most of your communication with students will occur in your on-line classroom. Instructor feedback for each student includes:

- personal critique letter responding to most recent writing project (10 critiques for Writing and Young/Younger Readers' series courses, 5 critiques for Art Meets Science and Language Rules courses)
- brief responses to exercises or discussions
- short midterm progress report (waived for Young/Younger Readers' series courses)
- one-page detailed "Final Evaluation" of progress at end of course

You are also responsible for contacting your students and keeping your supervisor informed. You report to a supervisor, who in turn reports to the program managers. Below is a detailed explanation of all instructor responsibilities.

BEFORE THE SESSION BEGINS

1. Submit all employment/contract paperwork to the program managers.
2. Familiarize yourself with the materials you receive, especially this *Instructor Handbook*, the lessons and student materials, and the classroom.
3. Download the latest *Course Information* packet (for students), *Parent/Guardian Information* guide, and Assignment packets (Level 1 and 2 only).



Login Page: <http://bluejay.cty.jhu.edu> click on "Welcome: CTYOnline Student Information"

Username is your CTY Staff ID number with an "s" in front of it. Your supervisor or the program managers can tell you your password.

NOTES:

- We are not using MyCTY.
 - The Student Information Guides for different courses have been combined into two documents for all courses: *Course Information* guide (for students), *Parent/Guardian Information* guide
4. Read the most current Course Information and Parent/Guardian Information Guide (provided by Supervisor) that you will attach to your Welcome email
 5. Contact your supervisor. You can get the name of your supervisor from the program managers. Contact information is available at the back of this packet.
 6. Email your introductory letter (see below). **The letter needs supervisor approval before you send it to students.**
 - **FALL AND SPRING SESSIONS:** Use the schedule provided by your supervisor. You may alter it, but your supervisor **must** approve schedule changes.
 - **SUMMER INTENSIVE SESSIONS:** You may *not* change the established schedule.
 7. Complete any appropriate training in classroom use and/or CTY policies.

DURING THE SESSION

➤ Introductory Letter

Email an introductory letter to your students **on or before** the first day of the course, copied to your supervisor. Your *Course Guide* contains a sample letter. All letters provide:

- ◆ your contact information -- email, phone, and hours you can be reached
- ◆ your supervisor's contact information -- name, email, and phone
- ◆ instructions on where to post the first message
- ◆ <http://bluejay.cty.jhu.edu> --instructions on how to find Welcome: CTYOnline Student Information for support documents
- ◆ Contact information for [Technical Difficulties](#)

➤ First Telephone Contact

Contact each student by telephone by the first day. Leaving a message is *not* sufficient. Introduce yourself; verify student contact information, and confirm download of any materials and receipt of introductory letter. If your course requires a text or materials purchase, verify that these have been purchased.



- ◆ **Early Summer "Relaxed" Schedule: Vacations are allowed.**
 1. Ask for vacation dates at the start of the course.
 2. While on vacation, students keep up with any assigned reading.
 3. Upon return, pick up where they left off. Example: if on vacation from June 15 thru June 21, on June 22 start Lesson 1.
 4. Lesson 2, scheduled for June 21, slides back to the week of June 29.
 5. **FWAs/Assignments/Lessons should be completed in sequence whenever possible.**

➤ Welcome Message

On the first day of the session, post a message in the Welcome and General Discussion forum. Introduce yourself and invite the students to introduce themselves.

➤ Updated Roster

Send a student roster with updated contact information to your supervisor and the program manager. Please **highlight** any changes.

➤ Responding to Discussions and Exercises

The lessons may include exercises and/or discussions before the final writing assignment (FWA) or end of lesson. Timely instructor response is required so the student can complete the FWA or complete the lesson. Group exercises can be addressed as a group in the appropriate topic (i.e., Level 3's Lesson 1 C-A-T Exercise); replies to individual exercises should be posted for each student and replies to YRS/YYRS discussion questions should be posted as replies. YRS and YYRS instructors can also post their own discussion questions in order to encourage student discussion of a topic related to one of the books studied.

- **SUMMER INTENSIVE SESSIONS:** Instructors must respond within 24 hours to exercises and to discussion questions of their choice. Information on responses can be found in the instructor schedule. YRS and YYRS instructors must post feedback to students within two days of each lesson's due date.

➤ Workshop (This does *not* apply to YRS and YYRS courses.)

The day after an FWA is due, post two or more student essays in the appropriate workshop topic, depending upon the number of students in the class. Each student's work should be posted at least twice during the course. Many instructors also post questions to get the workshop started. Check in regularly. The workshop is open until the next FWA is due.

- **SUMMER INTENSIVE SESSIONS:** The workshops are open for one week.

➤ Critiques and Lesson Feedback

A critique of each final writing assignment (FWA) should include detailed comments on what the student did well and what could be improved, quoting from the student's work. Although you may duplicate some advice in all critiques (i.e., punctuation guidelines), each one should contain **primarily** individualized commentary. See your *Course Guide* for sample critiques. **The critique for the final lesson should also include a paragraph summarizing the student's experience in the course.**

YOUNG/YOUNGER READERS

Lesson feedback is posted in the classroom. Posting procedure is in the classroom. Instructors should include tactful correction of student's misunderstandings of the book or misapplication of a concept (such as similes

vs. metaphors or 1st Person vs. 3rd Person point of view). A more complete list of topics for the feedback can be found in the *Course Guide*.

Keeping in mind the young age of the YRS and YYRS students, instructors should always find something to admire before focusing on suggestions for improvement.

DUE DATES

FWA critiques or lesson feedback is due (depending on course) according to the schedule approved by your supervisor, provided by your supervisor, or posted in the classroom. **Deviations from the schedule must be approved in advance.**

- **MID-SUMMER INTENSIVE SESSIONS:**

FWA critiques must be posted in the student's classroom every 2-3 days, according to the schedule.

Feedback about a Young/Younger Readers lesson should be posted within two days of each lesson's due date. Instructors may also post some comments to each Blog, keeping in mind that these public comments will be available for all students to read.

- **FALL, SPRING, AND EARLY SUMMER SESSIONS:**

FWA critiques must be posted in the student's classroom folder **by the day the next FWA is due (approximately ten days to two weeks).**

Feedback to YRS and YYRS students and parents should be emailed within two days of each lesson's due date, according to the schedule. YRS and YYRS instructors may also post some comments to each Blog, keeping in mind that these public comments will be available for all students to read.

- **Sample Critiques**

For each lesson, your supervisor will choose at random two or three critiques or feedback emails to read. Let your instructor know if there is a critique that you would especially like to be read.

- **Records**

You are required to maintain summary records of your students' performance and to keep copies of all your correspondence to students. You must keep copies of communications from students about important subjects such as withdrawals, late assignments, abuse allegations, and so forth. Always write "CTY" in the subject line of your messages to students and supervisors. Make sure the subject line accurately reflects the content of the message. Supervisors must be copied on all correspondence to students and parents.

➤ **Midterm Reports (Not Young/Younger Readers courses)**

Along with the critique of FWA 3 (short courses) or FWA 6 (series courses), post a short midterm report in the classroom. See the sample in your *Course Guide*. Ask the students to have their parents confirm that they have read the report. Parents post this confirmation in the notes section of the midterm report.

Instructions on posting are in “How to Use Advanced Uploading of Files” in your classroom.

For students in academic difficulty, you should copy to the parents and mail a paper copy. Notify your supervisor that you did so.

NOTE: Send reports on schedule regardless of whether the student is on schedule with his or her work.

➤ **Midterm Reports (YRS/YYRS courses)**

YRS and YYRS instructors need to send midterm reports (after Blog #5 due date) *only* to students who are in academic difficulty. For these YRS and YYRS students in academic difficulty, you should also mail parents a paper copy of the report and notify your instructor that you did so. Note: Send feedback reports on schedule regardless of whether the student is on schedule with his or her work so that parents are always notified if a student is falling behind schedule.

➤ **Sample Final Evaluations**

Send three drafts of final evaluations to your supervisor: for a student who performed exceptionally well, moderately well, and not well (one for each category). These are due at the same time as the critique of FWA 4 (Art Meets Science or Language Rules courses), FWA 8 (writing series courses), or Blog #8 (YRS/YYRS courses). Refer to this handbook for instructions and to your *Course Guide* for examples.

AT THE SESSION'S END

At the session's end, compose a detailed evaluation of each student's work and progress. Guidelines for composing and formatting those evaluations are in this handbook. Send them to your supervisor along with a roster, indicating any students who have withdrawn or requested grades. List grades on the roster--do not send them to students. Final evaluations **must be received by your supervisor no later that the date posted on your schedule.**

Please retain all student files for at least 6 months after the session's end.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

LATE/MISSING STUDENT ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURE

Because there is a very slim margin for error, instructors must be proactive about late assignments. Our policy is printed in the *Course Information* guide, available at <http://bluejay.cty.jhu.edu>, which we require parents to review with their child. This policy changes occasionally, so check it at the start of each term.

Check the day after an assignment is due to make sure everyone has completed it. Then follow this process for missing or incomplete work. Send messages from your classroom so they will be emailed to the student and saved in your message history. When you need to copy to parents, use your email program.

In YRS/YYRS courses, the message reminding students about missing or incomplete work should be emailed to both students and parents. Reminder: all correspondence should be bcc'd to Supervisor.

Art Meets Science and Language Rules courses:

- Minimum completion is 4 out of 5 FWAs
- One missed assignment: contact student immediately, set make-up date, remind about minimum completion, notify supervisor, copy parents with makeup schedule.
- If make-up date is not met: notify supervisor and provide all necessary details. Supervisor contacts parents and student with audit warning letter.
- Keep supervisor informed and bcc'd at each stage of the process.
- Two missed assignments: have supervisor notify parents and student is on audit status.

Writing Series and Young/Younger Readers courses:

- Minimum completion is 8 out of 10 FWAs or Lessons.
- One missed FWA (Writing) or Incomplete Lesson (YRS/YYRS): contact student immediately, set make-up date, and remind about minimum completion. YRS/YYRS: Also contact parent.
- If make-up date is not met: re-contact student and cc parents.

- Two missed assignments: notify supervisor and provide all necessary details. Supervisor contacts parents and student with warning letter.
- Keep supervisor informed and bcc'd at each stage of the process.
- Three missed assignments: switch to audit status.

Audit Status

A continuing pattern of late or missing assignments is grounds for switching to audit status. Switching to audit status is a supervisory decision.



Students may switch to audit status if they are not able to keep up with the course work or if they do not intend to complete the entire course. Students with a pattern of late or missing assignments may be switched to audit status by a CTY supervisor.

The audit option allows a student to stay in the course with missing work. The student can work at his/her own pace and turn in whatever work can be finished by end of the course. Auditors retain access to the instructor's expertise until the end of the course. The instructor will respond to the auditors' work after responding to other work submitted on time. Because audited courses are considered "incomplete," the course will not appear on the CTY Official Academic Record, the student will receive neither a certificate nor a final evaluation, and the course cannot be used as a prerequisite for other courses in the writing series.

Instructor Responses to Late Work (Non YRS/YYRS courses)

If a student submits several assignments in a group, you may respond to them as a group. You are not required to accept assignments that are more than 3 lessons overdue (e.g., you do not have to accept FWA 3 if it arrives when FWA 7 is due).

Short Courses Instructors: You are not required to accept assignments that are more than 2 lessons overdue (e.g., you do not have to accept FWA 2 if it arrives when lesson 5 is due).

LATE/MISSING WORK FROM INSTRUCTORS POLICY

If a set of critiques or progress reports is not completed on schedule, your supervisor will contact you. If you do not provide the missing material in a timely fashion and if your next set is also late, CTY will assess your performance by canvassing students and their parents. A combination of late critiques and student/parent comments indicating that responses are overdue will likely result in your dismissal. In such a case, the University's General Counsel (attorney) is likely to require the return of salary paid for work not completed.

WORK-RELATED REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURE

CTY will reimburse costs for certain office supplies, long-distance charges, and postage.

Here's how to get reimbursed:



- Download and complete the Expense Reimbursement Report you find at <http://cty.jhu.edu/ctyonline/library/hiring/expensereimbursementreport.pdf>
- Tape receipts flat to 8.5 x 11 sheets of paper-- number each sheet.
- Write your name in black ink on each sheet.
- Send the Expense Reimbursement Report and receipts to: **Steve Barish, CTYOnline, McAuley Hall 5801 Smith Ave, Baltimore, MD 21209**
- Submit all requests within one month of the course's end.
- Each request should be a minimum of \$5.

GRADE REQUEST PROCEDURE

We usually provide final evaluations in lieu of grades. However, grades may occasionally be necessary for school credit. Requests for grades and/or credit **must be made by a parent/guardian in writing**. This can be done via email or post. The request should be made to the attention of **Susie Maynard, Registrar**



email: ctyreg@jhu.edu

Fax: 410-735-6105

Address: CTY*Online* Registrar, Center for Talented Youth, Johns Hopkins University, McAuley Hall 5801 Smith Ave, Ste 400 Baltimore, MD 21209 USA

Phone: 410-735-6108.

Submit any grades on your student roster when you send in your final evaluations.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Student Copying

The nature of CTY assignments means that instances of plagiarism are rare. If you suspect a student has plagiarized, contact your supervisor to discuss the situation before taking action with the student. The policy on plagiarism is discussed in the *Course Information*. Plagiarizing is defined as "the submission or presentation of work, in any form, that is not a student's own, without acknowledgment of the sources."

Instructors may use Blog to provide information about using and citing outside sources when required for assignments.

Younger students, however, have been found to copy parts—often significant chunks—of other students' responses, sometimes out of enthusiasm or agreement. Teachers encountering this issue should first emphasize and say to students: "I need to know what YOU think." If a

student continues to copy the teacher should consult the supervisor. See also “Your Own Thoughts” in *Course Information*.

STUDENT PROBLEMS

Immediately notify your supervisor of any serious problems with a student's performance or of student-reported situations that could result in harm to the student or another person. If you have concerns about the content of a piece of student writing-- if it is violent, indicates depression, or seems like a cry for help-- show it to your supervisor. A student may be invoking another persona, but you can never be too careful, and it is better to exercise caution than close your eyes to a potential problem.

If you are uncertain whether something is a serious problem, contact your supervisor immediately. If your supervisor is unavailable, contact the program managers.

As representatives of Johns Hopkins University, CTY instructors act in loco parentis for students younger than 18 (i.e. all students). *Course Information* has information regarding confidentiality.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

This section offers guidelines for interacting with your supervisor, your TA, your students, and their parents.

WORKING WITH YOUR SUPERVISOR

Feel free to contact your supervisor on an as-needed basis. Your supervisor can help you with questions about pedagogy or policies, uncomfortable situations with students or parents, and any other difficulty you encounter. When the supervisor is not available in a crisis situation, contact the program managers. **You must BCC your supervisor on any email correspondence with students or parents.** Routine email correspondence goes to a secondary email address provided by your supervisor. In addition, you must contact the supervisor at the primary email address about all of the following:

- welcome letter and due date schedule (approval required)
- midterm progress reports (if applicable)
- sample final evaluations (approval required)
- final evaluations (approval required)
- students missing one FWA (short courses) or two FWAs or Blogs (series courses)
- students exhibiting behavior that may be a danger to themselves or others

INSTRUCTOR-STUDENT CONTACT

Frequency of Contact: Your students should log in to the classroom and check email every other day (in the Summer Intensive Program, every day). [The majority of your interactions with students should take place in the classroom.](#)

You can check your students' activity by clicking on "Activity Report," and "Complete Report" or "All Logs." You will see the dates of their first and last log-ons, number of messages read and number of responses posted. You can also see this activity by clicking on "Participants" and then on a student's name.

It's a little "big-brother-ish," but it helps to identify students who are not fully involved. If you find that a student is not keeping in touch, let him know that it is his responsibility to stay engaged.

Respond to each email and classroom message so the student knows that you have received it. If you do not have time for a complete response, reply that you will attend the student's case at a later time (e.g., "by 4:00 this afternoon"). This attentiveness will save you from "Why haven't you responded yet?" **Save copies of emails to and from students so that you can refer to them later, and bcc your supervisor.**

YRS/YYRS instructors do not have to respond to each student's discussion post, but instructors should post comments whenever they wish to voice their opinion, correct misconceptions, encourage student discussion, or start a discussion topic related to the book.

Writing series and short course instructors respond to workshop posts and monitor the discussion.

Respect: From the beginning, create a respectful environment for your students. Make sure they regard you with respect, and in turn, you respect them as students. Students can hastily scribble off an email with a tone they might not use in a face-to-face setting. Similarly, they may also write a quick ill-considered response to a critique they just received. For all issues about appropriateness, contact your supervisor before responding. Your supervisor will pass the issue, via the program managers, to the CTYOnline Director, Pat Wallace. Wait for a response from them on how to handle the situation. [An improper tone, obscenities, and derogatory language are not tolerated.](#)

Awareness of Internet Multimedia Links: As CTYOnline offers web- and email-based courses, the temptation may exist to share websites and links with your students. This is perfectly fine. We do request, however, that before you send a website to a student, that you be aware of what exactly is on the website, and what other websites or multimedia files it may link to. While the site you send may be appropriate for your student, other multimedia it gives access to may not. So please, be aware of where you can lead your students by sending them a link.

Turning in Work: Students must always post their work in the classroom; supervisors are able to check the work, and instructors are protected from "but I emailed it last week" excuses. A student may email one assignment if he is experiencing technical difficulties, but it should not become a pattern. [Post emailed work and responses in the classroom.](#)

Technical Difficulties: If a student has a technical problem that you are unable to answer, have the student fill out the Technical Support Form at <http://www.cty.jhu.edu/ctyonline/support/index.html>. The Technical Help will follow up. If you aren't copied on the response, contact Khari Kambon kkambon@jhu.edu to prevent a problem from falling through the cracks.

Maintaining Appropriate Boundaries: Some students will think of you as an email buddy and want to correspond daily. Make it clear that your relationship is professional; you will not have time to write personal messages every day. Students may also ask you to read assignments for school. If you wish, look at outside work on your own time; otherwise, don't hesitate to let a student know that you are unable to do so. If you have a few students who want feedback, you might suggest that the students form a writing group in Pizza Party.

It's common for students to want to correspond with you after the program ends, or "friend" you on social networking sites like Facebook and MySpace. With any students who contact you, you must continue to exercise good professional judgment. All the guidelines that apply to your interactions with students during the program apply after the program is over; you must not engage in inappropriate personal correspondence and/or communication inconsistent with the educator-student relationship. Do not interact with students on social networking sites. Again, online communities are not private or within your control. Allowing students access to your online profiles risks exposing them to content (photos, blogs, other profiles) that is inappropriate for the educator-student relationship.

Students may ask you to post videos from the program on web sites such as YouTube. Please do not do this. The students in the program are minors and we do not have authorization from their parents to post images of them on public web sites.

Personal Life: Use discretion when discussing your personal life with students. Do not discuss your social life with them. Even the most innocent bit of information you share about yourself can be misconstrued or turned into an unpleasant rumor. For your own protection, be careful about what you share.

Privacy: When emailing your students as a group, be sure to put student addresses in the BCC line so that they are not visible to other students. We are required to keep student information private.

INSTRUCTOR-PARENT CONTACT

First Contact: Your contact with parents will begin when you make your introductory telephone calls at the start of the session. Though you will speak primarily to students, be prepared to answer parent questions about your experience and about the course.

Levels of Involvement: Different parents prefer different levels of involvement in their children's courses. Some you will never hear from, while others will be in touch regularly. One common request is to have any correspondence cc'd to the parent; this is allowed. When

parents ask to see their children's work and your response to it, you can direct them to the classroom; their child can show them how to log on and view messages and work.

In all courses, parents are asked to acknowledge having read feedback, progress reports, or mid-term reports.

Contact Without Student's Knowledge: At times, a parent may email or call without their child's knowledge. Although this situation can be uncomfortable, you should speak directly with the parent. Please also review "Supporting Your Child" in *Parent/Guardian Information* for a discussion of increasing autonomy as students age.

Setting Boundaries: If you prefer not to encourage ongoing conversations, you can tell a parent that you would prefer not to compromise the relationship you are establishing with the child. This exchange is most likely to occur in the beginning of the course when parents are getting used to your role in the child's life. Whatever protocol you decide, stick to it. In the same way that we are clear with students, we can be clear with parents so that a comfortable boundary is maintained.

Since families pay tuition, you may feel obliged to honor every request. However, do not acquiesce to any requests that you feel are unfair. We want to create a safe learning environment where our students will grow but also enjoy themselves. Establishing mutual respect among instructors, students, and parents is crucial for this goal.

Over-involved Parents: Parent monitoring of student work is essential; parents doing student work is unhelpful. Parents who seem overly involved can be politely reminded that students will get more out of a course if they are experiencing it for themselves. You can refer parents to the section of the *Parent/Guardian Information* guide that describes an appropriate level of involvement. Remind them that this course is based on the assumption that the student can work individually, and that the student's ability to meet deadlines is a determining factor for continuing to the next level of the program. Obviously, you can make exceptions for learning-disabled students.

Trouble with Parents: If you are having trouble with a parent--if the parent is being overbearing or disrespectful in any way--contact your supervisor. You are not expected to deal with an irrational or harassing parent. However, you *are* expected to remain civil at all times when dealing with students and parents, even those who are difficult.

Angry Parents: During the session, you may face situations with unhappy parents. Typically, they will phone in response to a critique or missing assignment warning. If at any time a parent begins to shout or use an inappropriate tone, you may tell them that you are hanging up the phone and that your supervisor will phone them back. Parents are not allowed to scream at you or to use an inappropriate tone. If you get an irate parent on the line, inform him/her that you will hand the situation over to your supervisor.

SAMPLE PARENT QUERIES AND INSTRUCTOR RESPONSES

Here are some ways to answer common questions asked by parents. Reading through them will help you avoid the uncomfortable situation of being caught off-guard.

"How does my child compare to the other children?"

This is a tricky question. First and foremost, we never compare one student with another. If anything, a student is compared to a well-known standard, such as a first-year university composition course. In this case, start with the essentials. Refer to your records and summarize the student's progress: X has completed 4 of 6 lessons. X is behind in workshop. These are things the student knows.

If a parent probes, you can say that you need time to review the student's work, or refer the parent to your critiques. Ask if the child has shown the parent any critiques or suggest a particular critique the parent should read. This often begins a dialogue about the student's involvement in the course and puts the focus back on the student. You can suggest that the parent ask the child how well the child is doing so far in the course. Finally, you can let the parent know that you will write a midterm progress report (if applicable) and, at the end of the course, a final evaluation of each student's performance.

"How many students do you have at one time?"

Parents want to hear a small number. Realistically, this might not be the case, but it doesn't mean that their child gets any less time or attention than they would from an instructor with fewer students. Focus on the attention you give their child and they won't be so concerned with class size. You write a page or more of substantive comments on each assignment--which demands a far greater investment of time and thought than the "A+" or "Great Job" many of our students receive on in-school writing assignments.

For a graphic representation of the amount of time CTY *Online* Writing instructors spend on each assignment compared to high school and college writing instructors, send parents to www.cty.jhu.edu/writing/comparetime.html .

"Please go easy on my child. He or She is sensitive/young/shy..."

Let the parent know that the course material will challenge the student and you are there to guide, help, and enhance the student's writing. Encourage the parent to share any issues (e.g. ESL, health, learning problems) that might affect the child's ability to carry out the assignments. If these seem significant, bring them to the attention of your supervisor. Assure the parent that you treat each child as an individual, but that each child is nonetheless expected to meet the requirements of the course.

"How long have you been a writing teacher?"

This question, in various forms, is a request for a verbal resume. Feel free to rattle off your life's work and boast of your credentials. You are qualified to teach their child!

"What was the average SAT score for my child's group?"

We don't have access to SAT scores. We are not allowed to see them.

"I'm not sure that I can afford this program" and any other financial queries.

Instructors don't handle finances. Direct this call to the program managers.

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

EXPECTATIONS

To complete the course successfully, each student needs to complete either **four of five** (Art Meets Science or Language Arts courses) or **eight of ten** (Writing or Young or Younger Readers' series courses) lessons, although minimum completion is considered a very marginal pass. A student who finishes only the minimum number of lessons may continue in the program only if those lessons were high level work and the student showed evidence of dedication to the course.

Special situations do occur which may affect the ability of a student to complete all the lessons. For example, a student may fall ill and only be able to complete eight of ten lessons. In this case, you can recommend that a student proceed in *CTYOnline*. You can also make qualified recommendations; see the section on Writing a Negative Evaluation for more information.

POLICIES AND ENFORCEMENT

Students are expected to complete exercises and FWAs or Blogs on time and to participate in every workshop or, (in the YRS/YYRS courses) contribute at least three thoughtful responses to the discussion questions. From the start of your course, you should direct your students to the schedule in the classroom. **Emailing a reminder before a due date is also helpful.** Some instructors send students a "Quotation of the Day" with a reminder of upcoming due dates each day of the course. If an assignment is late, cite "Late Assignments from Students" in *Course Information*.

WORKSHOP (NOT APPLICABLE TO YOUNG/YOUNGER READERS COURSES)

A key component of all courses is the student workshop. Though the term may bring to mind people clutching manuscripts heavy with cross-outs and scribbles, our students participate by posting messages over a period of a week or more. Your role is to post student essays the day after an FWA is due and to kick off the discussion with a prompt. **Workshops are mandatory.** It is not up to your discretion whether to have them or not. Many instructors post student work anonymously. If you do not, inform students that their work will not be posted anonymously.

The term "workshop" is likely to be new to your students. In workshop, student writers get to see various responses to what they've written. When they workshop the writing of their peers, they develop their sense of what works and what doesn't. Because they must constructively

critique their peers' work, writers also develop poise and tact in written discourse that will serve them well.

Encouraging Substantive Comments in Workshop

Instructor Involvement: Your engaged presence in the workshop shows students that you value the activity.

Dialogue: Some instructors ask students to read and respond to **both** the essay and the comments of other students. In the past, this has produced better participation and, most importantly, a dialogue between students rather than stray comments.

Author Comment: Invite author(s) to respond to their peers at the end of the workshop.

Opening Questions: You can post questions specific to the lessons. Or you can simply ask the students to respond to the piece in any way they'd like. It is up to you.

Reminders: Include a workshop reminder at the end of each critique. Example: *Please don't forget to workshop Lesson 1.* See also "Policies and Enforcement" above.

MOODLE IS YOUR ONLINE CLASSROOM



Moodle stands for [*Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment*](#). It is the online classroom environment where students access their lessons, view the schedule, turn in their work, and participate in workshops and discussions. You will use the classroom to respond to all student work. Below is information that is specific to instructors.

Note: CTYOnline's preferred term for your learning environment is "classroom" or other non-technical term.

HOW TO LOGIN

Login page: <http://bluejay.cty.ihu.edu>

Instructor Login

username: s+staffid# (e.g., s123456)

password:

A program manager or a supervisor can provide your username and password.

What students are told about logging in, quoted from *Course Information*:

Student Login

CTY*Online* Login

- Your Login ID is your CTY student identification number. Your password was sent to you via email and postal service earlier. If you don't know your CTY*Online* Login ID and/or password, contact the CTY Information Office ctyinfo@jhu.edu or 410-735-6278.

CLASSROOM

Student classrooms may not be available until the start date. To access their classroom, students should:

- Go to <http://bluejay.cty.jhu.edu>
- **Username:** enter their CTYOnline Login ID (which is your CTY Student Identification Number)
- **Password:** enter their CTYOnline password (this is not the same as your MyCTY password)

NAVIGATION

You will see the following topics on your classroom homepage. Click on each to do the following:

Schedule: View the schedule. Notify supervisor in case of errors or questions.

Lessons: This links to the course content. **Review it in case of student questions.**

Welcome and General Discussion:

- Post your Welcome Thread by clicking "Add a new topic"
- Post general notices and tips
- Post student workshops (in "Lesson # FWA Workshop")

Responding to Students' Work

- Reply to student discussions and group work (in the appropriately labeled topic)
- Reply to individual exercises and FWAs by clicking View # submitted assignments. Click Grade or Update. Place comments in textbox. Save Changes.
- Answer student questions (which can appear in almost any topic)

- Review any tips and answer keys (in "Instructor Notes." If you have tips to add that would be beneficial for all instructors, contact your TA.)

HOW TO CRITIQUE ASSIGNMENTS

Advise your students to title their messages appropriately (i.e., "FWA 1"). Click "Grade" or "Update" to the student message and provide your critique. Instructions for **intertextual commentary** (your words interspersed with your student's) are here.

Staying online:

1. Open the message containing the essay you wish to critique.
2. Copy the essay.
3. Click "Grade or Update."
4. Paste the essay into the box where you would normally type your text.
5. Type in your intertextual commentary and critique.
6. Click on "Save Changes."

Going offline:

7. Open the message containing the essay you wish to critique.
8. Copy the essay.
9. Paste the essay into a Word document or text editor.
10. Type in your intertextual commentary and critique.
11. Save and copy the critique.
12. Go back to the classroom and open the student message again.
13. Click on "Grade or Update."
14. Paste your critique.
15. Click "Save Changes."

Two Ways to Post Critiques of Assignments

- All of the FWAs and many of the Exercises are Assignment modules into which students upload a file. To respond, go through these general steps.
- Click on the Assignment.

- Click on [View # submitted assignments](#)

A rectangular button with a light gray border and a yellow background, containing the word "Grade" in blue text.

- Click on
- This brings up a comment box. (The Grade option above it may be "No Grade," "Ranges of Quality," "AP Holistic," or simply the number 1. A grade allows the assignment to appear in the gradebook, which is a nice recordkeeper. Remember, we do not give grades.)
- You have two ways to return comments.
 1. Post comments in the text box provided for comment (copy/pasting from their document) and [save](#).
 2. Upload a file and paste a comment in the comment box.

HOW TO POST ESSAYS FOR WORKSHOP

1. Once you've selected an essay that you would like to post for workshop, go to it, select it, and copy it.
2. Click on the Workshop topic for that lesson (i.e., Lesson 1 FWA Workshop)
3. Click on "Add a New Discussion Topic"
4. Give your message a title, such as "Essay #1" or the title of the student work.
5. Paste the essay into the message box. Click on "Post to Forum."

INSTRUCTOR'S LOUNGE



Go into the Instructor's Lounge forum in the Writing and Language Arts section of CTYOnline's Synergy, found at <http://banner.cty.jhu.edu> and check out Helpful Tips. Ask questions there or by email to your supervisor. The Instructor's Lounge is also a great place to share your ideas and solutions with other instructors who teach your course.

FINAL EVALUATIONS

OVERVIEW

Evaluations represent your feedback on the sum total of a student's work in your class. They should be formal in tone and written with care. They should represent your best, most professional assessment of the student's work in your class. They should be honest, tactful, detailed, and fair. Evaluations should be individualized, not boilerplate. Check the instructor schedule for due dates for submitting final evaluations.

Written evaluations supply more specific information about course work than a letter grade. They may be used to also give an account of the student's work for home school records, as part of a portfolio in college applications, or in applying for school credit. The primary audience for the evaluation is the family; however, provide context for your remarks so that anyone unfamiliar with the course, such as school officials, can understand them.

Evaluation Process and Tips

You will most likely be asked to go through two or more rounds of revision of your evaluations. *Please do not take requests for revision personally.* The evaluations are unusual documents, and it can take multiple drafts to get all their elements in place. All evaluations are reviewed by managers, instructors, and supervisors.

- Please refer to your supervisor's comments on your three evaluation samples.
- Final drafts of final evaluations are due on or before the due date stated on the instructor schedule.
- The evaluation should be only one page, but make sure it is specific to the student, not boilerplate generalities or "filler" (three words when one will do).
- Comment on participation in workshop, which is mandatory when applicable. Treat workshop participation as class participation. Consider it 30% of the course

Flagging Problem Evaluations

Evaluations are reviewed to ensure that they are clear and correct (no grammatical, typographical, or formatting errors) and that all students are evaluated consistently. They are not screened for student performance problems. If you have a student who, in your professional judgment, should not continue in the program, inform your supervisor before writing the evaluation and note it on the student roster when you turn in your final drafts.

EVALUATION DO'S AND DON'TS

DO

1. Make your evaluations ONE (1) FACING PAGE. New instructors often wish to write a lengthier evaluation. This is a disservice. It raises the possibility of harassed clerks misplacing or forgetting a second page. DO write full evaluations. Fill the page top to bottom with useful prose. We require a Times New Roman font and a 12-point type. Margins should be .8 inches on the sides and bottom and 1.8 inches on the top.

2. In the heading, type first and last name. Include a middle name or initial if provided. Do not use nicknames in the heading. For students who use a name other than their first name, you may acknowledge this in the text of the evaluation. E.g.
 - i. Heading: "Jane Marie Doe"
 - ii. Text: "Congratulations, Marie,"
3. Address the evaluation to the student and write the evaluation in second person, just as you've written letters, critiques, and assignments. But remember that parents and school administrators are reading over the shoulder of the student.
4. Use the literary present tense when referring to student writing. Ex: "Your descriptive essay includes vivid sensory details that bring readers into the kitchen atmosphere effectively." "Your narrative revision, which you wrote in trying circumstances, demonstrates a solid command of narrative structure."
5. Refer to assignments as specifically as possible so that someone who is not familiar with the course could understand what the assignment was about and how far into the course the piece was written. Ex: "In your Lesson 9 name research essay..." Include a quotation from the student's work as an example when applicable.
6. Be clear and precise. Example: "You had trouble meeting deadlines: seven of your essays arrived two weeks late."
7. Focus on academic performance, not on attitudes and behavior. This will help you keep your feelings about the student as a person out of your evaluation. Try not to "psychologize" as in "I suspect that you lost interest in the course." Say instead, "In the second half of the course your assignments were consistently late."
8. Have someone else proofread your evaluations before you send them to your supervisor. This is a chance to get another perspective on what you have written.
9. Save your records for six months. Troublesome students come back!

DON'T

Don't wait until the last few days to start thinking about the evaluation process. Start soon and practice. It is not unusual to spend an hour a piece on your first few evaluations. But, once you get the hang of it, things go more quickly.

1. Don't compare a student with other students in your group. The course is one-to-one.
2. Don't treat the evaluation as the first place where a student hears negative criticism of his/her performance. You should have provided your students with ongoing feedback and help throughout the course. When you have already addressed problems during the term, refer to feedback: "As I've said in my critiques..."

3. Don't make statements about the student's innate abilities. Write "You write lively, well-organized essays," not "you are a gifted writer" or "you have a lot of promise or potential."
4. Don't include personal comments in an evaluation. E.g. "Thank you for the sealing wax you sent me." Save these types of messages for personal correspondence.
5. Don't make comments that are derogatory (or could be seen as derogatory) toward schools. (Instead of "your writing surpassed typical high school standards," write, "your work equaled the best in a college freshman composition course.")
6. Don't include a final letter grade, even if the student requested one. It will be taken care of separately. Instead, write the grade on the roster beside the student's name.
7. Don't generalize. Refer to specific essays. Refer to specific lines within the student's work. Refer to your own critiques for these specifics.
8. Do NOT refer to courses as YWT, EWT or THE WRITING TUTORIALS, or CTY Distance Education. We are "CTY*Online*" and each course has a title.
9. Avoid other acronyms such as "FWA 3"; make it "Lesson 3's narrative essay" instead.

WHAT INFORMATION SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN A FINAL EVALUATION?

Quality and Completeness of Assignments

Consider what these assignments suggest about the student's skills of observation and argumentation, ability to analyze and draw inferences, synthesize information etc. Instead of saying, "your essays were well-written," name some specific qualities garnered from their actual work. Quote a line or two from their work that is particularly impressive and illustrative of their strengths, but don't use quotations just to fill space.

◆ First section

Begin the evaluation by stating whether the student performed successfully. "Congratulations on completing the course." "Congratulations on a wonderful session!" "You have met the minimum requirement for completing the course." OR "I am sorry to say that you have not completed the course."

Briefly summarize the intent of the course. Here are some examples.

Level 3: Crafting the Essay

Congratulations, Student, on completing Level 3: Crafting the Essay! This is a college freshman level course in composition that provides detailed critiques of ten assignments in order to improve skill and style. Our correspondence developed your proficiency in writing personal essays, emphasizing narrative, and descriptive techniques. Your participation in a web-based writing workshop allowed you to refine your editing skills as you responded to other students' work.

Level 4: Writing Analysis and Persuasion

Congratulations, Student, on completing Level 4: Writing Analysis and Persuasion! This course develops critical and persuasive writing skills useful in most academic disciplines. During the course, you read and analyzed prose by Anne Lamott, Ted Gup, and Susan Orlean. Writing assignments included analysis, definition, narration, classification, and persuasion, essays typical of a sophomore-level college composition course. For the capstone writing project, you employed skills honed throughout the course to write an analytical essay, a polished work of creative nonfiction developed through three assignments, about a subculture you had been observing. In addition, a web-based writing workshop allowed you to refine your editing skills as you responded thoughtfully to the work of fellow students.

Level 5: Crafting Poetry

Congratulations on a fabulous term of writing in Level 5: Crafting Poetry, Student! This term, you have worked on crafting poetry at the college level. You wrote nine poem drafts and one revision, receiving detailed critiques of your assignments, which focused on prosody

and the relationship between imagery and tone. You accompanied your poems with insightful notes about your writing process and the challenges you faced in these assignments. In addition, a web-based writing workshop allowed you to refine your editing skills as you responded thoughtfully to the work of fellow students.

Language Rules: From Structure to Style

Congratulations, Student, on successfully completing Language Rules: From Structure to Style. This undergraduate college level course requires you to explore grammatical structures and analyze the way their usage affects your writing style. During this session, you explored elements of sentence structure, cohesion and pronoun usage, verb tenses, and appropriate use of the passive voice. Your assignments included analysis, revision, and meta-cognitive discussion of your own work. You also participated in an online workshop where you had the opportunity to comment upon the work of your peers.

Language Rules: Building Blocks

Congratulations, Student, on successfully completing Language Rules: Building Blocks. In this course, you explored elements of sentence structure, focusing on using a variety of sentence patterns and rhythms in your writing. You transitioned from distinguishing classes of words to studying the roles that subjects, predicates, and phrases play in the construction of sentences. Your assignments included analysis, revision, and meta-cognitive discussion of your own work. You also participated in online workshops where you had opportunity to comment upon the work of your peers.

Art Meets Science: Literature

Congratulations, Student, on completing the CTYOnline course, Art Meets Science: Literature. We've examined essays, poetry, and fiction to explore the connection between discovery in science and creativity on the page. Discussions of readings and short exercises prepare students to create their own poems and short-fiction. Students are further asked to reflect upon their work and that of their peers, engaging in online workshops to strengthen their editing skills and encourage critical thinking. These are assignments typical of an eleventh grade course at the high school level.

Art Meets Science: Nonfiction

Congratulations, Student, on successfully completing "Art Meets Science: Nonfiction." You have read essays on scientific topics by writers such as Annie Dillard, Oliver Sacks, and Stephen Jay Gould and have responded to the readings in interactive group discussions. You have also completed short exercises for idea development and five final writing assignments addressing the ways in which writing and scientific inquiry examine the same complex and unfolding universe. These are assignments typical of an eleventh grade course at the high school level. Our online workshops have given you the opportunity to respond critically to the work of others and to receive feedback on your own writing.

Young Readers' Series: [Name of particular theme]

Congratulations, Student, on successfully completing "Young Readers' Series: [Name of Particular Theme]." You have read three books by [author 1], [author 2], and [author 3] and have responded to these books in interactive group discussions that emphasized critical thinking skills and citing text as support. This course has also enhanced your knowledge of sophisticated vocabulary words and literary devices. You have also completed 10 blog assignments which varied from creative writing to analyzing, comparing, and contrasting the experiences of the three protagonists. These are assignments typical of a middle school level language arts course.

Younger Readers' Series: [Name of particular theme]

Congratulations, Student, on successfully completing "Younger Readers' Series: XXX Stories." You have read four books by [author 1], [author 2], [author 3] and [author 4] and have responded in interactive group discussions citing text as support. By your participation in discussion forums and quizzes, you have learned to clarify and expand your ideas and to make accurate inference to understand plot and character. This course has also enhanced your knowledge of sophisticated and literary devices and vocabulary words. In addition, you have completed ten blog assignments, which varied from creative and persuasive writing to comparing and contrasting characters and ideas. These are assignments typical of an upper level elementary school language course.

◆ Second section

In the next paragraph or two discuss the student's academic work. You need not comment on everything, but include a number of specific examples, so that the evaluation fairly represents the breadth of work completed by the student, commenting on both strengths and areas for improvement. Also discuss the student's workshop participation.

◆ Last section

This section contains parting words and recommendations for future work in the discipline. Here are some example recommendations.

Full recommendation to continue:

I recommend that you continue in CTYOnline; visit www.cty.jhu.edu to choose the next course for which you qualify.

No recommendation to continue:

I think you would enjoy greater success in the more structured environment of a face-to-face class, where you could have direct interaction with a teacher.

Qualified recommendation to continue (time management):

I recommend that you continue in CTYOnline only if you can commit to turning in your assignments fully and on time. Otherwise, you may enjoy greater success in the more

structured environment of CTY's summer residential programs where you can have both rigorous coursework and face-to-face interaction with your teacher.

Qualified recommendations (grammar skills):

I recommend that you continue with Language Rules: Structure to Style, a short course focusing on grammar and style, before moving on to the next writing series course. Visit www.cty.jhu.edu to choose the next course for which you qualify.

Qualified recommendations (late work and lack of workshop participation):

I recommend that you move to the next level of CTYOnline only if you can commit to following the schedule and participating in all workshops.

Important Notes:

1. You may *not* make blanket recommendations to CTY and CAA summer residential programs because you do not know for which program the student is qualified. It's best to make a general comment: "I recommend CTY's summer programs for additional writing courses."
2. Check with your supervisor before recommending Language Rules, as the student may have already taken it.

WRITING A NEGATIVE EVALUATION

Inform the Supervisor. Most students make great progress, and it is a pleasure to write about their work. Occasionally, however, a student will not perform up to expectations. In such a case, it is your professional responsibility to write an honest description of that student's work. Contact your supervisor before you write the evaluation, and clearly label it as negative on the class roster you send with your evaluations.

Be Fair. Observe the same principles as when writing a positive one: be tactful, detailed, and fair. Do not criticize a student for issues that you never brought up during the course (i.e., essays that are too short). Describe performance objectively rather than offering opinions. If the student handed in only seven out of ten assignments, do not say, "You were lazy." Say instead, "You handed in only seven of ten assignments." If you do not believe the student should continue on the basis of academic performance, say so.

Recommendations. What do you write if you are not recommending a future course? Be specific, but kind: "*I cannot recommend you continue in CTYOnline Writing.*"

Some good writers simply cannot manage a distance education workload independently. Typically, they exhibit a pattern of late or missing assignments. For these students, you can recommend "*the more structured environment of a face-to-face classroom, such as offered in CTY's summer residential programs.*"

HOW TO SEND FINAL EVALUATIONS TO CTY

Keep hard copies and save them on a disk before emailing them to your supervisor. CTY mails evaluations to students. **Under no circumstances may you send an evaluation or a grade directly to a student.** We approve and proofread them before they go to students.

1. Alphabetical order **by last name**.
2. Save your evaluations in one file, with your last name included in the filename. E.g., YellottEvaluations.doc
3. Email the file to your supervisor as an attachment.
4. The first page of your evaluation file must be a CLASS ROSTER.
 - a. Alphabetical order **by last name**.
 - b. Include notes and pertinent dates.
 - c. Include students who withdrew.
 - d. Note students receiving **a negative evaluation** or **recommendation not to continue**.
 - e. Students receiving grades.
 - f. Write the total number of evaluations over the total number of students (e.g., 10/10).
5. If a student has requested a letter grade, have the parents send a written request to the CTY registrar. Consult with your supervisor before putting a grade on the roster. **DO NOT send it directly to the student.** Grades are only given through the CTY registrar.

REMINDER: 1 file, alpha order, roster

CHECKLIST OF COMMON ERRORS



We care about errors. To fix one typo takes 5 minutes. Multiply 5 times the approximately 900 evaluations we receive, and you get 4,500 minutes = 75 hours. Catch your own errors before sending evaluations. Here are some of the most common errors:

- ❑ **Commas.** Pull out your handy style guide and double-check your punctuation.
- ❑ **You vs. Your.** Check carefully. This error comes up all the time. Spell check won't catch it. Make sure you do. Reading from right to left often detects this error.
- ❑ **Spelling.** Speaking of spell check, some of you don't use it. If your word processor doesn't have a spell check, please have someone else proofread your evals. If you aren't sure about how to spell a word, look it up in the dictionary.
- ❑ **Hyphens.** Words ending in "ly" **DO NOT** get hyphens. Here's a good rule of thumb: if you can make it into a compound word, you can use a hyphen.
- ❑ **Titles.** If you recommend a book, please use italics or underline the title. Titles of student essays go in quotation marks. Punctuation goes inside the quotation marks.

- ❑ **Compound complex sentences.** They may be beautifully written and grammatically correct, but Faulknerian sentences are difficult for parents to wrap their brains around (not to mention weary administrators who are on their 278th evaluation).
- ❑ **Fragments.** Yes, we love them. Especially when used for dramatic effect. But. Parents and school administrators look at a fragment as a mistake. Period. So keep them out of your evaluations.
- ❑ **Extra punctuation.** Sentences with two periods at the end of them, commas with periods following them, or punctuation marks out in the middle of nowhere. Use stronger glasses, or zoom in on your document.
- ❑ **Spell out numbers between zero and ten,** except when referring to Lesson and Level numbers (e.g. Level 1, Lesson 5, the fourth essay, ten lessons).
- ❑ **Errors in content.** We cannot fix errors in content, such as student workshop participation or a quotation. Please make sure your evaluations are accurate.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Please read the example final evaluations in your *Course Guide*. If you have questions, call your supervisor. She will be happy to help you as you wade through the evaluations mire. And, before we forget, here are the official course levels and titles:

Course: Level 3: Crafting the Essay
 Level 3: Crafting the Essay for Bilingual Students
 Level 4: Writing Analysis and Persuasion
 Level 5: Crafting Poetry
 Language Rules: Building Blocks
 Language Rules: Structure to Style
 Art Meets Science: Literature
 Art Meets Science: Nonfiction
 Young Readers' Series: Magical Life Lessons or On Our Own or Quests and Challenges
 Younger Readers' Series: Horse Stories or Dog Stories or Dragon Tales

As always, if you have any questions, phone, email, or come visit. We are happy to hear from you.

SAMPLE FINAL EVALUATION HEADER

PLEASE FOLLOW THIS EXACT FORMAT. MINIMUM MARGINS ARE 1.8 INCHES ON TOP AND NO SMALLER THAN .8 INCHES ON BOTTOM AND SIDES. Please [see](#) the italicized part of *CTYOnline*.

Final Evaluation *CTYOnline*

Student: Excellent Student
Course: Level 1: The Process of Writing
Instructor: Great Instructor

Date: February 6, 2006
Course Complete
10 of 10 Assignments Completed

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