

## Using Free Online Resources in Freshman English Composition

Community college students in freshman English are required to master both analyzing academic readings and producing academic writings. In other words, the process and the product. Unfortunately, many college English textbooks include a multitude of narratives that are poorly written and constructed, providing students with little experience evaluating more academic writing, which is the expectation of a rigorous college English composition course. In addition, many community college students struggle with being able to afford the cost of these textbooks.

### The Solution

While there are online textbooks for most college courses, college English courses do not require a text filled with mostly outdated articles. English courses can be invigorated by including current events and articles that explore and expand the college experience for diverse student populations. Exposing new college students to academic reading easily located in the college library databases gives them exposure to true research data with examples of authentic academic writing with analysis. Students can use these online academic articles to practice a variety of rhetorical strategies, such as summary and response, definition, comparison, contrast, cause and effect, analysis, and exemplification.

Many college English instructors will argue that students in beginning English courses need a grammar handbook, which is also readily available online. Students today reference online resources to assist with a multitude of grammar skills, including sentence boundaries and punctuation. Purdue Owl has become a favorite resource for many writers at all levels of academia.

### Getting Started

To help those instructors who might not know how to start building their curriculum using online resources, we have compiled a list of free online articles appropriate for college reading and writing assignments. We began this process by (1) researching and completing a literature review on relevant academic articles on the topic of open educational resources (OER), (2) interviewing several current faculty members at Wake Technical Community College as well as other college faculty members who use OER, and (3) creating

a log of articles from the current textbook used in all freshmen Wake Technical Community College English composition courses that can be accessed online. As more and more college instructors share excellent online resources, the OER option will become easier to implement.

### Online Resources

Below is a list of resources for college writing instructors interested in using online materials in lieu of a textbook.

- Concord Consortium <https://learn.concord.org>
- Ed Ready: [www.edready.org](http://www.edready.org)
- Hippo Campus: [www.hippocampus.org](http://www.hippocampus.org)
- Khan Academy:
  - Grammar <http://www.englishgrammarhelp.com>
  - Writing College Essays <https://www.khanacademy.org/college-careers-more/college-admissions/applying-to-college/admissions-essays/a/writing-tips-and-techniques-for-your-college-essay>
  - Literature <https://www.khanacademy.org/partner-content/tate/inspiration/literature-meets-art/a/terms-and-materials-literature>
- The NROC Project: <https://nroc.org/> and <https://nroc.org/what-we-offer/nroc-english/>
- Owl Purdue:
  - Online Writing Lab [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue\\_owl.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/purdue_owl.html)
  - MLA Introduction [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/mla\\_style/mla\\_style\\_introduction.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_style_introduction.html)
  - Research and Citation [https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research\\_and\\_citation/resources.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/resources.html)

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