# *JOINING THE CONVERSATION* WORKS WITH THE COUNCIL OF WRITING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS' OUTCOMES

The Council of Writing Program Administrators (WPA) established a set of desired outcomes for first-year composition courses across the country. As an inquiry-based rhetoric focusing on purpose and genre, *Joining the Conversation* helps instructors and students accomplish these teaching and learning goals. The following table provides detailed information on how *Joining the Conversation* supports each of the WPA outcomes.

| WPA OUTCOMES | RELEVANT FEATURES OF *JOINING THE CONVERSATION* |
|---|---|
| **Rhetorical Knowledge** | |
| **Learn and use key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts** | Using the metaphor of a conversation, **Chapter 1** establishes the **rhetorical concepts of purpose, audience, context, and genre**. These rhetorical concepts become the bedrock of the rest of the book, as the **assignment chapters (Chapters 6–11)** offer texts for analysis and detailed instruction on how to compose texts across genres. |
| **Gain experience reading and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers' and writers' practices and purposes** | **Chapter 1** defines **genre** and offers multiple visual examples of print and digital genres. **Chapters 6–11** feature four readings that span multiple genres. The **"Writer's Role"** box in these chapters identifies the **purpose, readers, sources, and context for each rhetorical situation** (e.g., p. 116). Each assignment chapter also includes a **"Genre Talk"** feature (e.g., p. 145), highlighting specific genre and design conventions. An auto-graded assessment in **LaunchPad** provides further practice for students. |
| **Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts, calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure** | The **"Starting a Conversation" questions** that follow each reading in **Chapters 6–11** call attention to the authors' style, voice, language, organization, and design choices. Then the **"Prepare a Draft"** section in each of these chapters gives drafting and design advice specific to the chapter's writing purpose, culminating in real essays by **featured student writers**. |
| | **Chapter 18** guides students in **drafting and designing** their own documents, with attention to appropriate conventions for academic writing. |
| | **Chapter 22** and the **Handbook** (Part Six in some versions of this book) provide practical advice for **writing with style and using appropriate voice, tone, language, and formality**. |
| **Understand and use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences** | **Chapter 4** explains the technological tools that can aid in effective **peer review.** |
| | **Chapter 20** discusses **presenting your work**, with detailed instruction on the technologies that can help students create effective **oral, multimedia, and group presentations and portfolios**. |

*(continued)*

| Rhetorical Knowledge (continued) | |
|---|---|
| **Match the capacities of different environments (e.g., print and electronic) to varying rhetorical situations** | With selections as varied as blog posts, infographics, photo essays, and editorials, the **readings in Chapters 6–11** and their **"Starting a Conversation"** questions show how different genres and media are suited to different rhetorical situations.<br><br>**Chapter 19** addresses **choosing the right genre** and covers composing **articles, multimodal essays, and Web pages** to suit various purposes and audiences. |

| Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing | |
|---|---|
| **Use composing and reading for inquiry, learning, thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts** | Beginning in **Chapter 1**, the metaphor of the **conversation** emphasizes writing as a tool for inquiry and the exchange of ideas. **Chapter 2** gives extensive coverage of **inquiry**, showing how students can "listen in" on interesting conversations around them as they search for a writing topic. **Chapter 3** provides advice and strategies for **critical reading, summarizing, and responding** to sources. |
| **Read a diverse range of texts, attending especially to relationships between assertion and evidence, to patterns of organization, to interplay between verbal and nonverbal elements, and how these features function for different audiences and situations** | With **24 readings**, *Joining the Conversation* offers a wide range of print, digital, text, and multimodal selections across many genres. The **"Starting a Conversation"** questions that accompany each reading ask students to consider the visual elements, design, organization, and tone of each piece and how the authors' choices suit the **writing situation and audience**.<br><br>**Chapter 11** models how writers **make claims and support them with evidence**.<br><br>**Chapter 16** then guides students in **developing and supporting their own thesis statements**, while **Chapter 17** discusses **organizing patterns**. |
| **Locate and evaluate primary and secondary research materials, including journal articles, essays, books, databases, and informal Internet sources** | **Chapter 4** covers **evaluating print and digital sources**, while **Chapter 12** discusses how to **manage source material**. **Chapter 13** discusses the range of research methods, with detailed instruction on using **electronic library catalogs, scholarly databases, and media search sites**, and demonstrates how **Boolean terms and search limits** can yield targeted results. **Chapter 14** discusses **field research** and collecting information sources via **interviewing, observations, and surveys**. |
| **Use strategies — such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign — to compose texts that integrate the writer's ideas with those from appropriate sources** | **Chapter 3** shows students how to summarize and respond to sources with **main-point summaries, key-point summaries, outline summaries, agree/disagree responses, reflective responses, and analytic responses**.<br><br>Once students have learned how to research effectively, **Chapter 21** gives detailed information on **integrating source material into a draft** in purposeful ways. This chapter covers **quoting strategically, attributing sources correctly, and paraphrasing and summarizing**.<br><br>**Chapters 23 and 24** help students **document sources in MLA or APA style** correctly. |

| *Processes* | |
|---|---|
| **Develop a writing project through multiple drafts** | Writing processes based on multiple drafts are demonstrated throughout **Chapters 6–11**, with examples from the **featured student writers**. Each of these chapters invites students to **reflect on their writing situation as they revise their drafts**.<br><br>**Chapter 22** emphasizes the importance of **revising and editing** and offers specific advice for working with multiple drafts. |
| **Develop flexible strategies for reading, drafting, reviewing, collaboration, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing** | **Chapter 3** offers multiple strategies for **reading critically and actively**, while **Chapter 5** gives **guidelines for conducting peer review and writing collaboratively**. **Chapter 22** provides practical **checklists and strategies for revising and editing**. |
| **Use composing processes and tools as a means to discover and reconsider ideas** | In **Chapter 2**, students learn to brainstorm, freewrite, blindwrite, loop, cluster, and map to **generate ideas** from the sources they encounter. The writing process sections in **Chapters 6–11** include moments for **asking questions, reconsidering the writing situation, and reviewing drafts**. |
| **Experience the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes** | By framing **writing as a conversation**, *Joining the Conversation* underscores the social nature of the writing we do. **Chapter 5** focuses exclusively on **the benefits and processes of collaborative writing**, covering group brainstorming and role-playing. **"Working Together" boxes** in **Chapters 1–11** suggest group activities to help students work through assignments collaboratively. |
| **Learn to give and act on productive feedback to works in progress** | **Chapter 5** also focuses on **peer review**, with **guidelines for giving and receiving feedback on written work**. **"Peer Review" boxes** in **Chapters 6–11** walk students through the process of reviewing each other's drafts. |
| **Adapt composing processes for a variety of technologies and modalities** | **Tech Tips** woven into the book offer suggestions for using technology at every stage, from **create a writer's notebook** to **managing digital sources** to **composing multimodal documents** and creating **multimedia presentations**. |
| **Reflect on the development of composing practices and how those practices influence their work** | The **conversation metaphor** at the heart of the book addresses how composing practices develop and change. Students are continually invited to **reflect on their writing situation** and reconsider **how their purpose, audience, and context influence their document**. |
| *Knowledge of Conventions* | |
| **Develop knowledge of linguistic structures, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, through practice in composing and revising** | **Chapter 22** calls attention to **spelling, grammar, and punctuation** during the revision process. **The Handbook (Part Six)** offers clear instruction on **sentence structure, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics**.<br><br>**LearningCurve** activities in LaunchPad provide extra help and **practice with common grammatical errors**. |

| Knowledge of Conventions (continued) | |
|---|---|
| **Understand why genre conventions for structure, paragraphing, tone, and mechanics vary** | The focus on **genre** throughout the book gives continual attention to how genre conventions differ. These differences are illustrated in the **"Genre Talk"** feature in **Chapters 6–11**, and **readings from a variety of genres** model the differences in structure, tone, and style.<br><br>**Handbook chapters** discuss why some genres may have differences in mechanics, tone, and sentence structure. |
| **Gain experience negotiating variations in genre conventions** | **Chapters 18 and 19** explain **genre conventions for academic essays, articles, multimodal essays, and Web pages**.<br><br>**Project Ideas in Chapters 6–11** invite students to compose in different genres. |
| **Learn common formats and/or design features for different kinds of texts** | **Chapters 18 and 19** discuss **genre conventions for academic essays, articles, multimodal essays, and Web pages** and provide visual examples. |
| **Explore the concepts of intellectual property (such as fair use and copyright) that motivate documentation conventions** | **Chapter 15** defines **plagiarism and research ethics**, with detailed strategies for **avoiding plagiarism**. |
| **Practice applying citation conventions systematically in their own work** | **Chapters 23 and 42** provide clear information on correct citation in **MLA and APA styles**. Dozens of source types and **full-page Tutorials** model correct citation. |

# SAMPLE SYLLABUS

The traditional calendar imagined for the syllabus presented here is a fifteen-week, two-class-meetings-per-week schedule (thirty lessons altogether). However, the syllabus could also be applied to a ten-week quarter, during which the class meets three times a week. This syllabus covers four assignment chapters and genres: Chapter 6, "Writing to Reflect" (a reflective essay); Chapter 7, "Writing to Inform" (a profile article); Chapter 10, "Writing to Solve Problems" (a proposal); and Chapter 11, "Writing to Convince or Persuade" (an argumentative essay).

For each class period, you will find a brief overview of what will be covered that day, along with suggestions for in-class activities and homework. Please note that you need not assign all pages of the chapters listed. Tailor the syllabus with specific sections of the chapters you feel your students should read. The activities and teaching tips are drawn from the corresponding chapter in the IM unless otherwise noted.

Don't forget that the handbook chapters of *Joining the Conversation* can be a valuable resource when students are stuck on questions of style or grammar. You might consider assigning the style chapters during the revision process so that they are fresh in students' minds.

| | **SAMPLE SYLLABUS USING *JTC* AND IM**<br>**(COVERS FOUR ASSIGNMENT CHAPTERS)** |
|---|---|
| **1** | Course introduction: Writing as participation in conversation<br><br>Review highlights of syllabus.<br><br>Introduce the writer's notebook and its uses.<br><br>Define and discuss **reflection**. Distribute reflection assignment. Engage students in brainstorming activities to generate topics.<br><br><u>In-class activities:</u><br>Activity: Keepsake Icebreaker Reflection<br><br>Students should start a writer's notebook with tabbed sections.<br><br><u>For next time:</u><br>Assign *JTC* Chapter 1, "Understanding Yourself as a Writer," and Chapter 6, "Writing to Reflect." |
| **2** | The first major assignment is based off of Project Idea #4 in *JTC* Chapter 6. Students will reflect on an issue in a discipline or profession of interest. This assignment will help familiarize students with the kinds of conversations that they may want to explore throughout the entire class.<br><br><u>In-class activities:</u><br>Activity: Observing a Scene<br><br>Read and discuss James Mollison's *Where Children Sleep* using the "Starting a Conversation" discussion questions in the textbook and the guiding answers in the IM.<br><br><u>For next time:</u><br>Assign *JTC* Chapter 2, "Finding and Listening In on Conversations."<br><br>Use one of the idea-generating strategies in Chapter 2 and the "Explore Your Experiences" section in Chapter 6 to narrow a topic for the reflective essay. |
| **3** | Focus on genre and design decisions. Invite students to discuss common features of reflective writing, making sure to also think about purpose and audience.<br><br><u>In-class activities:</u><br>Work on collecting details using *JTC* Chapter 6. You may want to meet in the library or computer lab or ask students to bring a laptop or tablet to class in order to do some simple research on the topics of their choice.<br><br>Read and discuss the "Genre Talk" section in *JTC* Chapter 6. Identify common features of reflective writing. Ask students what other genres of reflective writing they are familiar with.<br><br><u>For next time:</u><br>Assign *JTC* Chapter 5, "Working Together." Students should bring rough drafts of their reflective essays to class. |
| **4** | Students conduct their first formal peer review with an emphasis on focusing and developing their reflective drafts.<br><br><u>In-class activities:</u><br>Activity: The Sixty-Second Spill<br><br>Discussion Starter: Reflecting on Collaborative Processes<br><br><u>For next time:</u><br>Assign *JTC* Chapter 22, "Revising and Editing." Students should revise and edit their essays. |

| 5 | **Reflective essay due.** Have students write a reflective postscript in class that provides closure to the first assignment. Consider a postscript prompt like this one, which queries students' writing and revising processes: *What one area of this reflective essay are you especially pleased with? What one area could still use work if you had another week? What one strategy did you use during this assignment that you will use again?* |
|---|---|
| | <u>In-class activities:</u> Teaching Tip: The Reflective Postscript |
| | Teaching Tip: Commenting on Student Writing |
| | Introduce **informative** writing and preview the next assignment, a profile article of a person in their major or future profession. |
| | <u>In-class activities:</u> Activity: The Imaginary Machine |
| | Teaching Tip: Identifying the Informative Element in Other Types of Writing |
| | Readings: Bring several copies of a newspaper (such as the campus newspaper) to class. Ask students in groups to look at how information is presented and what roles the writers take on. |
| | <u>For next time:</u> Assign *JTC* Chapter 7, "Writing to Inform." Make sure that students read Rivka Galchen's profile on Misty Copeland, *An Unlikely Ballerina*, and answer the discussion questions in their writer's notebook. |
| | Students should generate ideas for people they could profile. This could possibly involve some Internet research. |
| 6 | Discuss the profile genre and reading questions from *An Unlikely Ballerina*. |
| | <u>In-class activities:</u> Interviewing for Information |
| | Teaching Tip: Putting Students in the Informative Role |
| | Discuss Chapter 14, "Conducting Field Research," focusing on interview techniques. |
| | <u>For next time:</u> Assign *JTC* Chapter 12, "Beginning Your Search," and Chapter 13, "Locating Sources." |
| | Students should also set up an interview. |
| 7 | Meet in the library to discuss searching for sources. |
| | <u>In-class activities:</u> Activity: Scavenger Hunt for Basic Library Reference Works |
| | Discussion Starter: Multiple Perspectives on Information |
| | Teaching Tip: Integrating Sources |
| | <u>For next time:</u> Students should gather source material and plan their interviews. |
| 8 | Peer review interview questions and evaluate sources. |
| | <u>In-class activities:</u> Activity: Read, discuss, and practice evaluating sources and quoting effectively (Chapters 4 and 21). |
| | <u>For next time:</u> Students should conduct interviews. They should then write a post-interview reflection that includes a summary of the conversation and identifies several quotes that could be used for the profile article. Ask students to consider effective organization strategies for the profile. In Chapter 19, assign "How Can I Write an Article?" and in Chapter 17, "How Can I Choose an Organizing Pattern?" |

| 9 | Discuss outlining strategies and drafting introductions and conclusions. (Use *JTC* Chapters 17 and 18.)<br><br>In-class activities:<br>Analyze the introductions and conclusions to several profile articles.<br><br>For next time:<br>Students should prepare drafts of their profile articles and bring them to class for peer review. |
|---|---|
| 10 | Peer review of profile article.<br><br>In-class activities:<br>Peer review. Use "Peer Review" box in *JTC* Chapter 7.<br><br>For next time:<br>Students should revise their profile articles and prepare for teacher conferences. |
| 11 | If your institution allows it, consider holding one-on-one student conferences instead of regular class. Alternatively, hold group conferences during class, making sure to check in with each group. You may not be able to look at every student paper, but you can get an idea of major areas of concern that you can address at the end of class or the beginning of the next class session.<br><br>In-class activities:<br>Group or one-on-one conferencing.<br><br>For next time:<br>Students should revise their profile articles using advice from peer review, conferences, and Chapter 22. |
| 12 | Day 2 of one-on-one or group conferences.<br><br>For next time:<br>Students should revise and edit their profile articles. |
| 13 | **Profile assignment due.** Postscript to analysis assignment done in class; consider a postscript that functions as a classroom assessment or feedback reflection.<br><br>In-class activities:<br>Teaching Tip: Taking the Pulse of the Class (See IM, "Teaching Chapter 6.")<br><br>Introduce Writing to Solve Problems assignment. See Project Idea #7 in Chapter 10, "Write a Proposal to Solve a Problem."<br><br>For next time:<br>Assign *JTC* Chapter 10, "Writing to Solve Problems." Students should reflect on what they have learned about their major or future career from the first two assignments. Use one of the idea-generating strategies in Chapter 2 to consider problems that need solutions in the same major or profession. |
| 14 | Discuss and refine students' problem-solving topics.<br><br>In-class activities:<br>Read and discuss Dan Hughes's *Proposal for Skateparks under Bridges.*<br><br>Teaching Tip: Representing Multiple Solutions<br><br>For next time:<br>Students should conduct research on the problem and the audience for their proposal. |

*(continued)*

| 15 | Identify common features of proposals. |
|----|----|
|    | <u>In-class activities:</u><br>Activity: Grant Writing |
|    | <u>For next time:</u><br>Have students draft an explanation of the problem and a succinctly stated solution to the problem. Review *JTC* Chapter 10 for help. |
| 16 | Informal peer review of problem statement and proposed solution. |
|    | <u>In-class activities:</u><br>Teaching Tip: Joining the Solution |
| 17 | Develop supporting points for proposed solution. |
|    | <u>In-class activities:</u><br>Activity: Using the Featured Student Writing Process Materials |
|    | <u>For next time:</u><br>Have students research proposals to determine design, organization, and content features of the genre. |
| 18 | Discuss design features of the proposal genre. Review Chapter 15, "Avoiding Plagiarism." |
|    | <u>For next time:</u><br>Students should prepare drafts of their proposals. |
| 19 | Peer review of proposal project. |
|    | <u>For next time:</u><br>Students should revise their proposal projects based on peer review. |
| 20 | **Proposal project due.** |
|    | <u>In-class activities:</u><br>Activity: Preconceptions about Argument |
|    | Activity: Rogerian Arguments |
|    | <u>For next time:</u><br>Assign *JTC* Chapter 11, "Writing to Convince or Persuade." |
| 21 | Discuss conventions of argumentative essays. Review rhetorical appeals. |
|    | <u>In-class activities:</u><br>Read Anu Partanen's "What Americans Keep Ignoring about Finland's School Success" and discuss the "Starting a Conversation" questions. |
|    | Teaching Tip: Rhetorical Analysis of an Argument. (Use a heuristic to analyze the rhetoric of Partanen's article.) |
|    | <u>For next time:</u><br>Students should prepare for an informal class debate on a topic such as tuition hikes at the school, an administrator's recent decision, or a problem affecting dorm life. (See the "Working Together" box in Chapter 11.) |

| 22 | Hold a mock debate in class. Reflect on the rhetorical strategies used by the different sides of the debate. |
| | <u>In-class activities:</u><br>Teaching Tip: Ubiquitous Argument |
| | Activity: Use the Comparing Convincing and Persuasive Arguments activity in the IM to evaluate the arguments from the mock hearing. |
| | <u>For next time:</u><br>Have students review "How can I draft effective paragraphs?" and "How can I design my document?" in *JTC* Chapter 18. |
| 23 | Keeping the conventions of an argumentative essay in mind, discuss relevant drafting strategies to achieve paragraph cohesion, unity, transitions, and appropriate design. |
| | <u>In-class activities:</u><br>Activity: Refining Essay Topics |
| | <u>For next time:</u><br>Assign *JTC* Chapters 11, 12, and 13. Students should do research and find sources to support their arguments. |
| 24 | Help students develop their claims. Discuss using reasons and evidence to support claims and to address counterarguments. |
| | <u>In-class activities:</u><br>Activity: Informal Prospectus Activity |
| | Teaching Tip: Unpacking a Claim |
| | <u>For next time:</u><br>Students should prepare drafts of their argumentative essays. |
| 25 | Peer review of argumentative essay. |
| | <u>In-class activities:</u><br>Activity: Informal Peer Reviews of Argument Essays |
| | <u>For next time:</u><br>Based on feedback from peer review, students should revise their essays and prepare for conferences. |
| 26 | Again, if allowed at your institution, dedicate two class periods to one-on-one conferences or group conferences. |
| | <u>In-class activities:</u><br>Teaching Tip: Self-Check List |
| | <u>For next time:</u><br>Students should revise their argumentative essays. |
| 27 | One-on-one or group conferences. |
| | <u>For next time:</u><br>Students should continue working on their argumentative essays. |

| 28 | **Argumentative essay due.** Introduce students to final portfolio or reflective learning assignment. Now is a great time to review learning outcomes and reflect on the semester.<br><br>For next time:<br>Assign "How can I develop a portfolio?" in *JTC* Chapter 20. |
| 29 | Help students collect work they have done throughout the semester and reflect on what they have learned. You may decide to return to reflective activities from *JTC* Chapter 6 and the accompanying support in the IM. |
| 30 | **Portfolio due.** Reflective postscript for whole course, course evaluations. |