



Faculty of Language Studies

EL121: The Short Story and Essay Writing

**(An Introduction to the Short Story
&
An Introduction to Essay Writing)**

Course Guide

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EL121 COURSE KIT

[THREE ITEMS AND ONLINE RESOURCES]

The teaching material for EL121 consists of three books listed below as well as some online resources that are introduced by unit in this Course Guide.

Make sure that you receive the three books listed below upon registering in this course.

- **Printed Material:**

1. *Two Course Books* [prepared specially for this course]:

- *An Introduction to the Short Story*
- *An Introduction to Essay Writing*

2. *Course Guide* [this booklet]

- **Online Resources** [detailed inside]

Preface

This is a short introductory course which aims to:

1. Introduce you to the Short Story and basic concepts in the study of literature
2. Introduce you to the basics of Academic Writing, and teach you how to produce an essay for AOU

This course is divided into two parts, each comprising seven units. The first half of the course introduces you to key literary terms and concepts through the study of the short story. The second half of the course will take you through the steps and teach you the skills required to produce a university level essay in academic writing. Below are the details for each part of the course:

UNITS	THEME/TOPIC	DETAILS
Part 1: Introduction to the Short Story		
1	Introduction	Introduction to the five elements of the short story
2	Focus on Setting	The importance of place, time, circumstances in a short story
3	Focus on Plot	The arrangement of events in a story
4	Focus on Character	The people in a short story
5	Focus on Point of View	The storyteller in a short story
6	Focus on Theme	The main idea in a short story
7	Wrapping Up	Reviewing the five elements of a short story
Part 2: Introduction to Essay Writing		
1	Introducing Essay Writing	Introduction to the concept of academic essay writing
2	Researching Your Bibliography & Critical Thinking, Critical Reading, Critical Writing	The importance of preparing a bibliography in the research process
3	Getting Started: Brainstorming, Outlining and the Thesis Statement	Prewriting activities
4	Opening Paragraph and Writing Your Essay Outline	Planning and writing the first paragraph and outlining the main ideas of the essay
5	Using Sources: Quoting, Paraphrasing and Avoiding Plagiarism	Important skills to master about sources for academic writing
6	Revising and Editing the First Draft	The importance of revising and editing the paper before its submission
7	Finalising and Submitting the Final Version	Submission of the final version of your paper

Both parts of this course (the Short Story and Essay Writing) are practical in nature, and aim to introduce you to the basic skills you will need to succeed in our undergraduate programme.

In Part One of the course (the Short Story) you will learn basic literary concepts and terminology, and you will be introduced to important writers from all over the world. While reading these stories you will also practise different ways of reading – for comprehension, for discussion and from a particular angle or point of view such as through character or theme. Learning how to read carefully and thoughtfully will help you in any of the courses you take at Arab Open University (AOU).

In Part Two of the course (Essay Writing), you will be guided through the entire process of writing an academic essay from start to finish. This includes analysing the essay question, using prewriting activities to get started, and organising and producing a well written essay.

The aims of the short story part of the course are to:

- recognise different kinds of literary genres
- understand the key elements of the short story
- recognise literary terminology and apply it to literary works
- develop skills of literary analysis
- use the skills introduced in this course in more advanced literature courses at AOU.

The aims of the essay part of the course are to:

- develop skills in paraphrasing and writing summaries
- use different sources in your writing of academic essays
- write a polished academic essay
- develop sound research skills, such as searching for key concepts on the Internet, collecting sources and preparing a bibliography
- use skills learnt in this course in more advanced courses at AOU, especially in writing Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs) and research projects.

Of particular relevance to the essay part of the course are online sources detailed in Section 5 of this guide. These are useful resources that you should take seriously if you want to improve your writing skills. We advise you to familiarise yourself with the online resources before going to your first tutorial. We also advise you to access them and to list them on your desktop while you are taking this course and as long as you are pursuing your university education because they will also be relevant to more advanced courses at AOU.

All in all, EL121 is meant to prepare you for the study of more advanced literature and linguistics courses which you will be required to take in upcoming years. It will also provide a solid foundation for any programme of study pursued at AOU.

This Course Guide (CG) gives you detailed information about this course as listed below:

- course aims
- course description
- course structure/organisation
- course assignments, tutorials, and exams
- online resources
- course calendar

We advise you to read the CG before you go to your first tutorial. Of special importance to your starting the course is to know the Course Learning/Teaching Material. Please make sure that you receive all materials before you go to your first tutorial.

There will be a two-hour tutorial every two weeks. We would like to advise you to take an active role in these tutorials. We would also like to advise you to make use of the office hours which your tutor will set aside for meeting with you on individual bases to help you with the course, answer your questions, and give you guidance in preparing your assignment.

Tutorials and office hours provide excellent opportunities for you to listen to and practice English. It is your duty, therefore, to practice your English by asking and answering questions in the time set for you by your tutor, as well as during tutorials and at every opportunity.

Good luck.

Course Authors
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Table of Contents

	page
<i>Preface</i>	3
<i>Table of Contents</i>	6
1. INTRODUCTION	7
2. COURSE DESCRIPTOR	10
3. COURSE AIMS AND DESCRIPTION	10
4. COURSE TEACHING MATERIALS	11
5. ONLINE RESOURCES	11
6. COURSE STRUCTURE/ORGANISATION	15
7. UNIT STRUCTURE	17
8. ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMS	18
9. TUTORIALS	19
10. COURSE CALENDAR	20
11. ACTIVITIES AND IMPORTANT FORMS IN ESSAY WRITING	21

1. INTRODUCTION

This *Course Guide* is the first thing that you should read very carefully before you go to your first tutorial. Of special importance to your starting the course is to know the **Course Learning/Teaching Material**. Please make sure that you receive all material before you go to your first tutorial. Other aspects of the course that you should know are the following:

- course aims;
- course structure/organisation;
- course assignments,
- tutorials, and exams; and
- online resources.

Details on all these aspects are found in this *Course Guide* below.

There will be a two-hour tutorial every two weeks. We would like to advise you to take an active role in these tutorials.

We would also like to advise you to make use of the office hours which your tutor will set aside for meeting with you on individual bases to help you with the course, answer your questions, and give you guidance in preparing your assignment.

Tutorials and office hours provide excellent opportunities for you to listen to English and most importantly to speak it. It is your duty, therefore, to practise your English by asking and answering questions and participating in discussions.

Introduction to the Short Story:

This part of the course has been designed to meet the needs of the AOU student. It will introduce you to the genres of literature, literary terminology and literary analysis by focusing on the short story. This part of the course is made up of seven study weeks. We will focus on one of the elements of the short story each week, namely:

- setting
- plot
- character
- point of view
- theme

You will be introduced to literary analysis through your consideration of each short story in the first part of the course. Literary analysis is a skill which you will develop in this part of the course and then use in more advanced literature courses that you will be required to take in upcoming years.

The most important thing to remember as you begin the exciting reading process, which has been referred to as a literary journey in your short story course book, is that you should not be discouraged by difficult vocabulary items. Do *not* look up every word you do not understand in the dictionary. This may distract you and make the reading process seem difficult. In fact, we have helped you with some of the difficult words by defining them in footnotes at the bottom of the page. You will definitely be learning plenty of new words and concepts, thus expanding your vocabulary store. One of the aims of this course, in fact, is to improve your vocabulary. We would like for you to imagine that all of these words are *treasures*, and that you will be involved in an exciting treasure hunt. So remember to collect as many treasures as you can on your amazing journey through storyland!

Introduction to Academic Essay Writing:

This part of the course also has been designed with AOU students in mind. Its aim is to teach you everything you need to know about producing one of the basic elements of our undergraduate courses – the essay. At AOU we call academic essays TMAs. This is the abbreviation for the following: **Tutor Marked Assignment**. This means exactly what it says – an essay that you hand in to your tutor to be marked and counted toward your final grade in the course. All of the courses in the English Language and Literature (ELL) programme have TMAs, as do many of the courses in other programmes at AOU. So learning how to write an effective and successful TMA will prove useful to your entire academic career.

As you follow this course, you will learn the steps involved in producing a polished essay in academic writing. This will include:

- Understanding and analysing a **Tutor Marked Assignment** question (TMA essay)
- Working with sources (collect, evaluate, create a bibliography in proper format)
- Writing summaries, syntheses and critiques
- Planning and writing a persuasive essay

While this might seem like a lot of different and difficult tasks to master in a short course, you will find that you already have done many of them before. For example, “Plan a persuasive essay” – haven’t you ever tried to convince your parents to buy you a new pair of shoes? Or your children to eat their vegetables? Or your boss to give you a raise? Well, if you have, you have planned a “persuasive argument” – a beginning step in writing a “persuasive essay.” This course will show you how to organise your ideas, to support them with evidence from sources, and to present them in a proper academic format and style.

If you look at the Course Calendar in this Course Guide, you will see that each week is dedicated to a certain topic(s) with specific concepts and skills that you will practice, and assignments that you will hand in to show that you have mastered that skill. These assignments include researching your topic and producing an initial bibliography (list of sources you will use to write your paper) and later revising that bibliography, submitting a thesis statement/introductory paragraph and later revising this assignment too. You will also submit a first, second and final draft of your essay itself. You are probably starting to see a pattern here.

As discussed in the course text, the theme of this course is **the Hero**. A hero is someone famous for his or her bravery and skill. In this course we will be looking at a variety of “Thematic Readings” about heroes. Some of them will be fiction, like stories about the heroes Beowulf, Hercules or Robin Hood. Others will be non-fiction, and will talk about historical figures like the nurse Florence Nightingale or the pilot Amelia Earhart, or from the Arab/Islamic culture, Khalid ibn-al-Walid, Tariq bin Ziyad and Salah-al-Din Al Ayoubi.

Other non-fictional readings in this class will be more academic, discussing for example the qualities of a hero. You will not be required to use one of the heroes we read about in this class in your essay – you will be able to choose a hero of your own as the topic of your paper. But you will have to use the questions that we ask as the starting point of your paper, no matter whom you choose to write about in it.

As you progress through this course, you will be asked to perform activities that relate to the specific skill being studied at the time. Many of these are directly related to the culminating or final project in this course – the TMA about heroes. In the following sections these activities will be explained, and any necessary worksheets will be provided. Be sure when you finish reading each unit in the course book that you do the activities connected with it. In order to make this easy for you to follow, activities will be listed by unit headings in Section 11 of this Course Guide. Some of these will be handed in to your tutor to be assessed and graded. All of them will help you as you move toward your goal of learning how to produce a successful TMA.

There are many online and printed sources that provide additional or background reading on the topic of “Academic Writing.” A list (or bibliography) of online sources is provided in Section 5 of this Course Guide. Please note, however, that some of the information in the online sources might differ slightly from that found in this course – that is because this course has been prepared *especially for you*. So consider your course book the most accurate and important information for your studies at AOU, and use any other readings as background or supporting material for this course. Be sure to use all of the support and guidance provided by this course, the course materials, tutorials, tutor’s office hours, peer (your classmates’) support – it is all there to help you succeed. Also be sure to do your part in ensuring your success – do all the exercises and assignments that are required to do by yourself, follow the Course Calendar so you can plan to finish them in a timely manner, practise skills taught in this course (especially those that you haven’t yet mastered), and always remember the adage (saying) – *If at first you don’t succeed, try, try again*.

2. COURSE DESCRIPTOR

Course No & Title: EL121: The Short Story and Essay Writing

Course Level: EL121 is a level-1 course

Credit hours: 4

Course Prerequisite: EL111: English Communication Skills (I)

3. COURSE AIMS AND DESCRIPTION

This is an introductory course in the short story and academic essay writing that aims to:

1. introduce you to both the short story and essay writing in a simple and practical manner
2. give you ample practical training in the two subjects
3. acquaint you with basic terminology used in literature and academic writing
4. prepare you for the more advanced literature courses in the BA programme in English Language and Literature

The first part of the course, the short story, deals with the careful and focused reading of different short stories and aims at equipping you with the necessary skills that will enable you to:

- recognise different kinds of literary genres
- understand the key elements of the short story
- recognise literary terminology and apply it to literary works
- develop skills of literary analysis
- use the skills introduced in this course in more advanced literature courses at AOU

The second part of the course, academic essay writing, deals with the skills required to produce a university level essay and aims at equipping you with necessary skills that will enable you to:

- develop skills in paraphrasing and writing summaries
- use different sources in your writing of academic essays
- write a polished academic essay
- develop sound research skills, such as searching for key concepts on the Internet, collecting sources and preparing a bibliography
- use skills learnt in this course in more advanced courses at AOU, especially in writing Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs) and research projects

4. COURSE TEACHING MATERIALS

The teaching material for EL121 consists of three books listed below as well as some online resources that are introduced gradually in the *Course Book* units.

Make sure that you receive the three books listed below upon registering in this course.

(i) EL121: *Course Books (Two)*:

- *An Introduction to the Short Story*
- *An Introduction to Essay Writing*

(ii) EL121: *Course Guide* [this booklet]

The Course Guide (CG) comprises important information about the course as shown in the table of contents above.

(iii) Online Resources & Additional Readings

The learning/teaching material in the essay writing book is supplemented by exercises and activities from several online sites. Details about these sites are in the next section.

5. ONLINE RESOURCES

As pointed out above, you will be regularly referred to some online resources (and one additional print text reading) in the Essay Writing part of this course. The “Thematic Readings” for this course about the hero also will be available online through the course website. Below are details about these sites.

Unit One Additional Readings and References

1. Sample 5 Paragraph Essay and Outline

<http://www.gc.maricopa.edu/English/essay/index.html>

2. Analysing the Essay Question: Common Terms

<http://www.wmin.ac.uk/page-2714>

Unit Two Additional Readings and References

1. Using the Internet for Research

<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/library/instruction/researchinternet.html>

2. Bibliography on Evaluating Web Information
<http://www.lib.vt.edu/help/instruct/evaluate/evalbiblio.html>

3. Chapter 2: Reading and Making Notes (pp. 25-62)
The Good Arts Study Guide (AOU Version)
NOTE: This reference is not online but comes from a set book for the AOU course A123 A & B “An Introduction to the Humanities.”

4. Basics of Critical Reading
[http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Critical%20Reading%20\(03F\).pdf](http://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/documents/Critical%20Reading%20(03F).pdf)

5. What Is Critical Reading?
http://www.criticalreading.com/critical_reading.htm

6. What is Critical Thinking?
http://www.criticalreading.com/critical_thinking.htm

7. Critical Reading v. Critical Thinking
http://www.criticalreading.com/critical_reading_thinking.htm

8. Critical Thinking
<http://www.accd.edu/sac/history/keller/ACCDitg/SSCT.htm>

9. Critical Reading Towards Critical Writing
<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/critrdg.html>

10. Critical Writing
<http://www.gpc.edu/~lawowl/handouts/critical-writing.pdf>

11. Taking Notes from Research Reading
<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/notes.html>

12. The Book Review or Article Critique: General Guidelines
<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/bkrev.html>

13. How to Write a Critique
http://www.studentservices.uwaterloo.ca/disabilities/Services/Web_materials/How%20to%20Write%20a%20Critique.pdf

Unit Three Additional Readings and References

1. Brainstorming Techniques
<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/brainstorming.html>

2. Developing Coherent Paragraphs

<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/parag.html>

3. Outlines

<http://www2.hmc.edu/~alves/outline.html>

4. Thesis vs. Topic

http://www.k-state.edu/english/nelp/engl.f00/thesis_vs_topic.children.html

5. Topic Versus Thesis – A Worksheet

http://www.wmtpa.org/hs/histdept/histres/history%20research%20paper%20updated_files/page0029.htm

6. Creating a Thesis Statement

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/545/01/>

7. Revising Thesis Statements

<http://www.iupui.edu/~uwc/pdf/Revising%20Thesis%20Statements%20Feb%202003.pdf>

8. Discovering Ideas Handbook: The Thesis Statement

<http://daphne.palomar.edu/handbook/thesis.htm>

Unit Four Additional Readings and References

1. Using Thesis Statements

<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/thesis.html>

2. What Is an Opening Paragraph?

<http://www.iusb.edu/~sbeng/sh/opening.pdf>

3. Lesson: “Perfecting My Pal Poe’s Paragraph”

http://www.education-world.com/a_tsl/archives/05-1/lesson002.shtml

4. Introductions

<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/introductions.html>

5. Introductory Paragraph Techniques

<http://elc.polyu.edu.hk/CiLL/eap/essayintrottype.htm>

Unit Five Additional Readings and References

1. Close Reading

<http://www.mantex.co.uk/samples/closeread.htm>

2. Using the Work of Other Authors

<http://web.ceu.hu/writing/sources>

3. Summarising, Quoting and Paraphrasing (A Slideshow with Activities)

www.mrsruxton.com/QUOTE.ppt

4. MLA Brochure

http://students.ecpitech.edu/libtec/catalogs/guides/MLA_Brochure_TC.pdf

5. Harvard Citation Style

http://www.library.uwa.edu.au/education_training_and_support/guides/harvard_citation_style

Unit Six Additional Readings and References

1. Transition Table

<http://www.cms.edu.do/Teachers%20Folders/willian%20farren/Pages/express/TWlistGL.htm>

2. Developing Coherent Paragraphs

<http://www.utoronto.ca/writing/parag.html>

3. Revision Checklist

<http://grammar.about.com/od/developingessays/a/revischeck.htm>

Unit Seven Additional Readings and References

1. Twelve Common Errors: An Editing Checklist

http://writing.umn.edu/tww/grammar/common_errors.htm

2. Reverse Outlining Steps

http://mendota.english.wisc.edu/~techpage/handbook/wp_reverse_outline_sample.html

3. OWL Online Writing Labs

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/index.html>

4. OWL MLA Formatting and Style Guide

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>

5. Harvard Citation Style

http://www.library.uwa.edu.au/education_training_and_support/guides/harvard_citation_style

6. Links to Online Writing Labs

<http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/library/instruction/researchwriting.html>

7. How to Write Book Reviews and Literary Criticism

http://eb.com/library/home/BSW_Book_Review.pdf

6. COURSE STRUCTURE/ORGANISATION

The course is essentially based on the *Course Books*, *Course Guide*, and the accompanying support material in the mostly online resources.

Each Course Book is divided into seven units. Each unit is to be covered in one week.

Part One: The Short Story

The short story course book is divided into seven units, with each unit focusing on one of the elements of the short story. The first unit is basically an introduction and the final unit is a sort of “putting things together” in order to remind you that these elements are all interrelated and actually work together in order to create a “unity of effect.”

The short story part of the course is divided into seven study weeks as detailed below:

Week One:

We will begin by introducing you to the short story as a genre and important literary terminology and some key concepts related to the art of the short story. We will also briefly look at a precursor of the short story, the English fairy tale “Jack and the Beanstalk.”

Week Two:

Here we will discuss the importance of setting in a short story. The crucial role of setting will be observed in two short stories: Jack London’s “To Build a Fire” and Ray Bradbury’s “A Sound of Thunder.”

Week Three:

Plot will be considered through our examination of two short stories: “After Twenty Years” by O. Henry and “A Letter from Gaza” by Ghassan Kanafani.

Week Four:

Character will be emphasised in our analysis of Langstan Hughes’ “Thank You Ma’am.”

Week Five:

The spotlight will be placed on point of view in our consideration of “Araby” by James Joyce and “The Tell Tale Heart” by Edgar Allan Poe.

Week Six:

Theme will be highlighted in our examination of “The Scarlet Ibis” by James Hurst.

Week Seven:

In wrapping things up, we will consider all of the elements studied in the previous weeks. We will also take a very brief look at a universal theme in literature: the journey.

Part Two: Essay Writing

The essay writing course book is divided into seven units. Each unit focuses on a particular aspect of the writing process. This book provides you with a step by step approach to writing a polished academic essay.

The essay writing part of the course is divided into seven study weeks as detailed below:

Week One:

The first week will introduce you to the concept of academic essay writing, and explain the goals and structure of this part of the course.

Week Two:

The importance of preparing a bibliography in the research process will be discussed and different ways of handling and using sources will be introduced. The key skills of critical thinking, reading and writing skills will be explained to you, as well as ways to practise these skills by producing summaries, critiques and syntheses.

Week Three:

This week is called “Getting Started” and will focus on prewriting techniques of brainstorming (such as freewriting, clustering, and journalistic questions). You will also learn how and why to write an outline, and how to begin to formulate your thesis statement.

Week Four:

In this week we move to the writing of the essay, concentrating on the opening paragraph. You will also learn how to make use of the outline introduced in the previous week.

Week Five:

This week builds on skills learned in Week Two when you were introduced to using sources. Here you will learn how to use these sources as you write your paper, including skills such as quoting, paraphrasing and avoiding plagiarism.

Week Six:

In this week you will learn how to revise and edit the first draft on your essay, beginning the very important post or “after” writing phase of essay writing.

Week Seven:

Week Seven brings to a conclusion our course, helping you to finalise and submit a polished TMA that follows the conventions or rules of academic writing, and puts to use all of the skills you have learnt in this course.

7. UNIT STRUCTURE

Short Story:

Each unit in the *Course Book* is divided into 4-6 sections.

At the beginning of each unit there is a listing of:

1. Unit Aims
2. Unit Sections

Other Sections of the unit include:

3. Background Information on a particular short story element
4. Introduction to the particular short story to be considered
5. Before you read activities
6. While you read questions
7. The short story to be considered that week
8. Exercises and Activities
9. Rounding Up (including new terms, summary of important concepts learnt in that unit and looking forward to the next unit)

*Please note that answers to the questions asked are found in each unit. You should try to answer all of the questions on your own before looking at the answers provided in the unit.

Essay Writing:

Each unit in the *Course Book* is divided into 5-8 sections.

At the beginning of each unit there is a listing of:

1. Unit Aims
2. Unit Sections

Other Sections of the unit include:

3. Explanations of specific skills to be covered in the unit
4. Examples of the skills with discussion
5. Exercises to help you practise these skills
6. Rounding Up (including new terms, summary of important concepts learnt in that unit and looking forward to the next unit)

In addition to the new material introduced, each section contains exercises and activities that are meant to facilitate and enhance your learning and to consolidate what you have learnt in earlier units or from online resources.

8. ASSIGNMENTS & EXAMS

For EL121 there will be one Midterm Assessment (in the Short Story part), one Tutor-Marked Assignment (in the Essay Writing part) and one Final Exam (covering both parts) as detailed below:

8.1. Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)

EL121 has ONE tutor marked assignment (known as **TMA**). The grade given for the TMA will include specific preliminary activities assessed by your tutor. This represents

30% of the overall continuous assessment score (OCAS). Details about this assignment as well as guidance notes will be given to you in your first Essay Writing tutorial.

8.2. Exams

In addition to the TMA, there will be:

1. **One Mid-Term Assessment (MTA)**, and
2. **One FINAL EXAM** at the end of the course.

8.3. Distribution of Marks

The balance between the three components of assessment is shown in the following table:

Components	Form of Assessment & Marks		%
CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT	TMA	30	50%
	MTA	20	
FINAL ASSESSMENT	FINAL EXAM	50	50%
GRAND TOTAL		100	100%

9. TUTORIALS

For EL121 there will be eight 2-hour tutorial sessions as illustrated in the Study Calendar below. In other words, there will be a tutorial every two weeks.

Tutorials are interactive sessions that should not be viewed as traditional lectures. The main objective of tutorials may be summed up as follows:

1. to provide you with opportunities to practise your English and hence upgrade your fluency and improve your ability to communicate in the English language;
2. to enable course tutors to review teaching materials and activities with you and your classmates [as specified in the Course Study Calendar] as well as to answer your queries;
3. to provide a forum of discussion where you and your colleagues take a central role, particularly with regard to discussing important issues related to the course material.

In addition to bi-weekly tutorials, all tutors have certain weekly office hours (posted on their office doors) where they can meet you to answer your questions or explain the comments they have made on your TMA or other assignments.

10. COURSE CALENDAR

Course Part	Week	Unit No & Title	Tutorial No	TMA & MTA
I. Short Story	1	Unit 1: Introducing the Short Story	1	
	2	Unit 2: Focus on Setting: "To Build a Fire" by Jack London and "A Sound of Thunder" by Ray Bradbury		
	3	Unit 3: Focus on Plot: "After Twenty Years" by O. Henry and "A Letter from Gaza" by Ghassan Kanafani	2	
	4	Unit 4: Focus on Character: "Thank You Ma'am" by Langston Hughes		
	5	Unit 5: Focus on Point of View: "Araby" by James Joyce and "The Tell Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe	3	
	6	Unit 6: Focus on Theme: "The Scarlet Ibis" by James Hurst		
	7	Unit 7: Wrapping Up	4	MTA
II. Essay Writing	8	Unit 1: Introducing Academic Writing		
	9	Unit 2: Researching Your Bibliography	5	
	10	Unit 3: Brainstorming, Outlining & Thesis Statement		
	11	Unit 4: Opening Paragraph and Revising Outline and Thesis Statement (Peer Review in Tutorial)	6	
	12	Unit 5: Using Sources		
	13	Unit 6: Revising and Editing the First Draft (Peer Review in Tutorial)	7	
	14	Unit 7: The Final Draft – Proofreading, Final Editing and Formatting		TMA: End of week
	15	Course Revision Feedback on TMA	8	
	16	Final Exam		

11. ACTIVITIES AND IMPORTANT FORMS IN ESSAY WRITING

Unit One: Introducing Essay Writing

Unit One Activity: Submit a Proposed Bibliography

In order to be prepared for the next unit, you will work independently on a bibliography or list of sources that you will bring to class with you. This will give you experience in doing preliminary (early) research on your TMA, and give you materials to work with as we begin to evaluate sources. Here are the details of the assignment:

1. Choose one of the TMA questions for this year's course as the starting point for your essay. Using the examples above, analyse the question and make sure that you understand *exactly* what it is asking about the subject.
2. Using online and print sources (from local libraries for example) find **10** possible sources that you can use on this paper. Up to 4 of them can be from the list of readings for this course; the other 6 you will need to find on your own. You are encouraged to use a variety of sources – scholarly from journal or books; literary stories; magazine articles; encyclopedia entries; websites and other online sources. Unit Two will have a section on how to do research – so be sure to read this before you start this activity.
3. Include basic bibliographic information such as author, name of book, page numbers, publishers and year of publication (or if a website the address and the date you accessed it) – we'll learn later in the course how to put this information into the proper format.
4. Bring 2 copies (important!) of your typed bibliography list to class next tutorial.

Unit Two: Researching Your Bibliography & Critical Thinking, Critical Reading, Critical Writing

Unit Two Researching Your Bibliography

Because AOU is an open learning institution, it does not have a 'traditional' library full of actual books like those found in traditional universities – although some branches do have small libraries with a limited collection that you can use. What AOU does have is an online or electronic version of this which can be accessed online (discussed below). In many countries where AOU branches are located, however, you can make arrangements to use resources in the traditional libraries of other universities and colleges.

There are two main ways to obtain information and sources electronically. If you are looking for "published" material (whether on paper or online), you will probably be doing this through an online library (such as the OU library we use at AOU). When you

do this, you will search through a computer database, which is a collection of records or data (information) gathered in a computer system. Some common databases (plural of databasis) that you will likely use include those on our AOU website like Academic Search Elite. Each of these will have its own way of looking for sources, usually using the name of the author, book or article, subject words, or keywords. Most will have a tutorial to guide you through your search, as well as ways to limit or refine your search. The more you use online databases, the better you will get at searching – be sure to ask other students and your tutor for guidance. You may also check and see if your branch offers any general help – and if it doesn't you may want to ask that they provide some.

The other way students usually find information electronically is through the Internet using Search Engines. The Internet (also called the World Wide Web or WWW) is a series of computer networks connected worldwide that let you search, chat and send e-mail to people all over the globe. I am sure most of you already have experience using the Internet. When you 'google' someone or something, you are using a Search Engine to find information on that person or topic. A search engine is a system designed to find and retrieve information (from a computer, or in this case from the entire Internet). It uses keywords to search for matches, usually starting from the most relevant to others that are much more remote (sometimes it even gives you the match in %). Some popular Search Engines that you may know are: Google, Yahoo, or Alta Vista. Most give you an "Advanced Search" option – when you press it you will find ways to limit your search so you don't waste time going through thousands of irrelevant matches. For example, if you are interested in finding information on a book by a certain title, you don't want to get matches for the perfume or car that share the same keywords. This is similar to the way that databases discussed above help you to focus and limit your search.

Another useful way to limit searches is to enclose the keyword within quotation marks. For example, if you are looking for information on the author Joseph Conrad and simply type: Joseph Conrad, then the Search Engine will find all matches for the word 'Joseph' and all matches for the word 'Conrad'. But if you start your search by enclosing his name within quotation marks "Joseph Conrad" then you will *only* get matches with websites that are about 'Joseph Conrad'. If you are looking for information about a certain novel he has written, then you could add that to your keyword search. You don't want to use too many words or ones that are too specific early in your research; start with a fairly wide net and then narrow it down as you refine your topic and bibliography. Like many things, this skill is learned through practice, and by trial and error. You may need to use a different but similar word from the one you are using (a synonym), a different spelling or a specific term that is commonly used. Be sure to ask friends and other students how they search online, as well as your tutor for helpful hints.

Unit Two Critical Thinking, Critical Reading, Critical Writing

There is an excellent collection of online webpages discussing different aspects of Critical Reading and Critical Thinking that are listed in Unit Online Sources that we *strongly urge* you to read.

Unit Two Activity: Critical Thinking About a Text

In the Course Book (Activity 3.4) you were asked to think critically about an excerpt from the famous American writer Mark Twain. Type your answers on a separate piece of paper, and bring it to your next tutorial with you. Be prepared to discuss this with your classmates, and defend your opinion or position about this excerpt.

Unit Two Activity: Write a Summary

Section 5 of this unit explained how to write a summary. Now let's practice this skill. Choose one of the articles from the Thematic Readings and write a 1-2 page summary (double spaced; New Times Roman 12 or similar font) following the steps and information outlined in the Course Book. Remember to proofread and edit all your written work. Bring TWO copies of this assignment to your next tutorial – one to share with a classmate to be 'peer-reviewed', and the other to hand into your tutor to be assessed.

Unit Two Activity: Write a Critique

The goal of this activity is write either a literary or a non-literary critique. Choose one of the Thematic Readings (not the same chosen for the summary) and write a short critique using the criteria described in the Course Book. Be sure to include first a summary from the author's point of view, and then an evaluation from your point of view. Your critique should be 1-2 pages in length, double spaced, and in New Times Roman 12 or similar font. Remember to proofread and edit all your written work. Bring two copies of this assignment to your next tutorial – one to share with a classmate to be 'peer-reviewed', and the other to hand into your tutor to be assessed.

Unit Two Activity: Write a Synthesis

The TMA that you will write for this course (and for most of your courses at AOU) will be a kind of synthesis paper, in which you use several different yet connected sources to discuss a main argument or thesis. Most TMAs are more complex than a simple two or three page synthesis paper, however; so different sections may actually work as smaller syntheses (plural of synthesis). In a 2000 word TMA you aren't always expected to discuss all of your sources at the same time – but they should all contribute in some way to the main argument or thesis you are proving or demonstrating in your essay.

It is useful in all of the three kinds of writing described in this unit (Summaries, Critiques, and Syntheses) to use quotes to support your claims, in addition to paraphrasing main ideas. Quotes should *only* be used as supporting evidence, and should never take the place of your own ideas or your own voice. In Unit 5 you will learn the best and most effective way to use quotes and to paraphrase.

While you could write a synthesis of any articles, some are easier to synthesise because they have a more obvious or more important relationship. Your tutor will choose THREE articles for you to synthesise in a short essay of 2-3 pages. Remember you must first decide what the relationship is between the articles, and then write a thesis reflecting

this relationship. Include a short summary of each, but don't simply produce a paper that is one summary or critique stuck on after another. There are many websites listed in Section 10 at the end of this Unit that give more explanation and examples of how to write a synthesis. If you are not sure, do read them and talk to your tutor. Learning how to write a synthesis is one of the most important steps toward your academic success. Bring two copies of this assignment to your next tutorial – one to share with a classmate to be 'peer-reviewed', and the other to hand into your tutor to be assessed.

Unit Three: Getting Started: Brainstorming, Outlining & the Thesis Statement

While all of the links we provide for each unit should be helpful to you, here is some more detail that may help you to make use of them and other supplemental material for this course.

For example, the article on "Outlines" (Unit Link #3) goes through the process of developing a Basic Outline into a Topic Sentence Outline. It also includes links to other writing tips that you may find useful as you begin to actually write your TMA in this course.

In addition to helping you to prepare for writing a TMA, an outline written on a final exam not only helps you to stay organised and on track, but also gives your tutor an idea of where you plan to go in the essay. This way if you run out of time to complete the essay answer, you may be able to get some partial marks. You will also avoid wasting time starting at a blank piece of paper, or forgetting what you wanted to say next – because your outline will be there to guide you and encourage you.

We have included a link to an excellent short reading below entitled "Developing Coherent Paragraphs"(Unit Link #2) which explains all the ingredients you need to create a clear and effective paragraph. Please do review this as the paragraph is the main building block of any essay. If you have weak paragraphs your essay won't hold together, the same way weak bricks will cause a building to crumble into a pile of rubble.

Also below is a link to a Topic versus Thesis Worksheet (#5 of the unit links). Please do the exercises and bring it to your next tutorial to make sure that you understand the important difference between topic and thesis. The last part of the worksheet asks you to develop your own topic and thesis. Well, part of that is already done for you – we already have our "topic" for the TMA in this course – that would be the question provided for you in your TMA Assignment Booklet.

Then decide which of the topics provided in your TMA Assignment Booklet you will want to write about and then fill in the following in your own words (as you were telling this to a friend:

1. The topic of my TMA is:

Now try to develop that topic into a thesis (you may want to reread the Unit Link #4 if you're having difficulty). Remember, your thesis should suggest what you will be arguing or proving in your essay.

2. The thesis of my TMA is:

Unit Three Activity: Practicing Thesis Statements

Writing fully and clearly developed thesis statements is a skill that you will have to learn and practice before you become proficient at it. For this activity come up with five or ten possible essay topics on a variety of subjects. Then go through the steps outlined in this section of the Course Book until you have come up with a proper thesis statement. Share your thesis with a friend or classmate and see if they can fill in the formula blank, and paraphrase the thesis. Is this what you really meant? If you are having difficulty, read Unit Links #7 and #8, and ask your tutor for more guidance. Try not to get frustrated; this will take some time to master.

Unit Three Activity: Opening Paragraph, Thesis Statement and Outline – First Draft

In the next unit (Unit 4) you will be starting to write your essay. In order to do this, you need to finish reading the Thematic Readings on Heroes so that you know (a) which of these will be useful to you for your TMA; and (b) what additional sources you will need to locate. The next unit focuses on the beginning of your TMA, including the opening paragraph and the thesis statement. It will also work more on revising the outline of your essay.

Please prepare and bring TWO copies, typed and double spaced of the following three assignments:

1. A draft of your opening paragraph
2. A draft of your thesis statement
3. A draft of your TMA outline (preferably in Topic Sentence format)

This activity will be continued in the next unit in Section 5 when you work on revising what you have prepared here. You need two copies of this activity (6.4) – one to hand in to your tutor, and one to revise. Call this assignment by the title of 6.4.

Unit Four: Opening Paragraph & Writing Your Essay Outline

One of the links for this unit (Unit Link #4) gives us more guidance in evaluating opening paragraphs by telling us what to *avoid* in opening paragraphs. Some of the openings you should avoid are:

- a. **The Place Holder** – you don't really have anything to say, but you have to say *something* so it's just filling up space on the page

- b. **The Restated Question** – while this is a good way to start an exam essay, you can't just rewrite the question for your TMA answer – you need to come up with your own personal approach, and be sure to include a thesis statement
- c. **The Webster's Dictionary** – not a very interesting way to start, and overused by students (making it *less* interesting)
- d. **The “Dawn of Man”** – opens with broad and very general statements, so general that they don't mean anything
- e. **The Book Report** – name, author, and book given in the opening paragraph; academic writing requires more than this!
(<http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/introductions.html>)

[Please look at the more detailed discussion of each of these by accessing Unit Link #4 online.]

For additional practice visit Unit Link #5. Please note, however, that this exercise uses different names for techniques; however, it should still be helpful to you in thinking about possible ways to start an essay.

Unit Four Activity: Revising Your Opening Paragraph, Thesis Statement and TMA Outline

You were asked in the Unit Three Activity above to prepare two copies, typed and double spaced of the following three assignments:

4. A draft of your opening paragraph
5. A draft of your thesis statement
6. A draft of your TMA outline (preferably in Topic Sentence format)

Bring one of the copies to your next tutorial. You will hand this in to your tutor. This copy will be marked and count toward your course grade. Your tutor will also comment on what you have prepared, and provide you with feedback to help you improve your work.

Take out the other copy of the three assignments and read over your introduction. Does it use any of the strategies discussed in Section 3 of the unit? If it does, which one does it use? After reading about all these strategies, can you think of better ways to begin your TMA? Using the new skills you have learned in this unit about how to start an essay, please revise your opening paragraph. Once you have done this, you may also want to revise your thesis statement and/or your outline. If you do so please print out another copy to hand in to your tutor; if you do not revise your thesis statement or outline, simply write on the other paper you will hand in “not revised.”

You may want to try a few different techniques or strategies to begin your paper, and see which works best for you. If you want to start with a quote, fact or statistic, then you will have to find one that fits the characteristics listed above. The sources that you have found as you've done research is a good place to start looking. In fact, as you read them you can keep in mind this question – would this be a good quote or fact to use when I

start writing about this subject? Or you could use a quote that does not come from your sources; just be careful that you do not take it ‘out of context’. This means that you don’t take a quote from a paper that is *against* something and use it to try to show something different with it.

Here is an example of what we mean. Suppose the original quote said the following:

Cairo is one of the most interesting cities in the world. In addition to the Pyramids and the Sphinx, you could spend many days visiting the beautiful mosques and famous museums, or travelling along on the Nile on a felucca. You would never hear someone who has visited the city say that Cairo is boring.

The whole point of the above is to say that Cairo is a really interesting city with many things to do. But what if someone using this source wrote the following:

I don’t think that Cairo is a very fun place to visit. I went there with my family last summer and found that I was often bored and wished that I could go home. In fact, I am not the only one with that opinion. A famous travel writer has also said “that Cairo is boring” (quote source here).

In this second passage, the idea is to show just the opposite, that Cairo is a boring with nothing to do. And although this passage does use an exact quote from the first, this quote is “out of context” and also dishonest because it is falsely using a quote that is meant to say something else to show the opposite. It’s almost as if this second passage is using a quote to try to trick the reader. This is not acceptable in academic writing.

Be careful also that you don’t use a quote that may mention your topic, but in a way that is unclear or unrelated. If you are not sure then ask one of your friends or classmates to read the quote and ask him or her what it makes them think. You can also ask your tutor for advice.

Once you have revised your assignment (call this version Draft 2), please print out THREE copies. Below is EXACTLY what you should bring with you to your next tutorial:

1. Draft One of your Opening Paragraph (ONE COPY ONLY FOR YOUR TUTOR)
2. Draft Two of your Opening Paragraph (THREE COPIES)
3. A draft of your Thesis Statement (THREE COPIES)
4. A draft of your Outline (THREE COPIES)

The extra two copies will be used in the “Peer Review” activity described below.

The grade of the assignment you hand in to your tutor next tutorial (Introduction and Thesis Statement: Draft 3) will be based on the improvement from the first and/or second draft(s) handed in today. Make sure you consider the following as you read over your work:

- Did you use any of the techniques explained in this unit?
- Did you take into consideration the comments made on the peer review form? By your tutor?
- How successful or effective was the opening paragraph and thesis statement?

You tutor will also give you feedback on your outline – be sure to take this into account as you do further research and begin writing the body or main part of your paper (these are the paragraphs that come between the introduction and the conclusions).

Don't worry – you will have a chance to revise your opening paragraph and thesis statement, and hand in a revised draft next week. This draft (Draft 3) will also be graded, and will count toward your mark. But before you do this, you will have the opportunity to revise what you have written based on what you have learned in this lesson, as well as what advice and feedback you have received from your peers. This will be discussed in Course Book as “Peer Review.”

Unit Four Activity: In Class Peer Review of Opening Paragraph and Thesis Statement

This in class activity will require that you work in groups of three students. Give each of the other two students in your group a copy of the latest version of your:

- a. Opening paragraph
- b. Thesis statement
- c. TMA outline

Now take the same documents from them. You should now have in front of you a complete set of documents (listed above) from two other students. Your tutor will provide you with “Peer Review” forms – one for each set of documents. Please read over the instructions on the form *carefully* and listen to your tutors directions before you start. Then read and “peer review” the work of the other two students. Be sure to point out the strengths and weaknesses you see in their work, as well as offer suggestions on how they can improve it. Write comments (annotate) the documents themselves in addition to filling in required information on the form. Then write your name on both the document and form, and hand them back to the student whose work you have reviewed.

Once everyone in your group has reviewed the work of the other two, as a group discuss each student's work. Be sure to take notes on what is said about your writing so you don't forget! When you hand in your revised opening paragraph and thesis statement next tutorial, you must attach the peer reviews done on your work. The other students in your group will do the same with the reviews you have given of their work. How well you have reviewed the work of others will be a part of your assignment grade, in addition to how well you have been able to incorporate the useful feedback of your peers and your tutor in your revisions.

The form that you will use in class is reproduced below.

Opening Paragraph and Thesis Statement Peer Review Form

Please read over this form carefully, and listen to your tutor's instructions before you begin. Be sure to fill in all required parts as *fully* and *clearly* as possible. This form will count toward your grade in this course.

Reviewer's Name: _____

Author's Name: _____

Part 1: The Thesis Statement

Read and annotate the author's thesis statement, pointing out strengths, weaknesses and suggestions for improvement. Then fill in the following thesis formula. If you are not able to fill in all the information, suggest ways the author can improve the thesis.

a. In this paper the author will argue/demonstrate that:

b. He/she is using the evidence or sources of:

c. This is important or interesting because:

Now answer the following: Was there a fully and clearly developed thesis statement? If not, why not?

Unit Five: Using Sources: Quoting, Paraphrasing, & Avoiding Plagiarism

Proper formatting is an important element of your TMAs at the university level of study, and the use (or lack) of proper formatting will be reflected in your TMA grade. Although formatting styles are only conventions (they are not rules written in stone), they were developed and refined by writers and scholars to serve a particular purpose, and have been proven to work over many years of use. The Purdue OWL online writing guide (an excellent writing resource!) explains the importance of MLA citations in the following way:

MLA style specifies guidelines for formatting manuscripts and using the English language in writing. MLA style also provides writers with a system for referencing their sources through parenthetical citation in their essays and Works Cited pages (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/>).

Writers who properly use MLA also build their credibility by demonstrating accountability to their source material. Most importantly, the use of MLA style can protect writers from accusations of plagiarism, which is the purposeful or accidental uncredited use of source material by other writers (Purdue OWL). See Unit Link #4 for an MLA brochure that you can print out to use as a reference.

There are many online sources to help you with the details of the Harvard style; one is included as Unit Link #5. You will have the opportunity to practice these styles in the Activity for this unit described below when you prepare your revised bibliography.

Unit Link #4 has a great slideshow presentation that explains how and why summaries are used in essays, and has activities to help you write proper summaries. The same slideshow also has similar activities for quoting and paraphrasing, which we will be discussing below. So once you have read this unit, be sure to look at this slideshow, and do the activities in it. If you have any questions about them you can ask your tutor for guidance. But like anything else in writing, you must practice before you master a new skill.

Unit Five Activity: Annotated Bibliography

Now that you have a clearer understanding of how to use sources, it would be a good time for you to review and revise the bibliography for your TMA. To do this you will produce an “Annotated Bibliography.” As we discussed above, we already know what a bibliography is from Unit 2; it is a list of sources put into a certain format. Annotated is another word you learned earlier in the course (also in Unit 2) when we talked about ‘annotating the text’ or making notes or comments while reading. If we put these two ideas together, we have a list of sources (bibliography) that we will be making comments and notes about. Usually an annotated bibliography has a brief summary of a source, and then a short discussion of its strengths and weaknesses. For our purposes, you will also be asked why you have chosen a certain source, and what purpose it will serve in your TMA.

Here are the steps for this assignment:

1. Write a list of the sources plan on using for your TMA. This list should have 5-10 sources.
2. Label them as either ‘Primary Source’ or ‘Secondary Source’ – refer to Unit 2 for a review of this
3. Using either MLA or Harvard citation style put the list into the proper format. Be sure to refer to the use the examples provided in this unit, and refer to online sources listed below if needed
4. Write a brief summary of each source (approximately one paragraph long)
5. Write a brief explanation (a short paragraph) explaining *why* you have chosen this source and *how* strengthen your TMA
6. Now think about each source, what kind of source is it? What role will it play in your TMA? Does it do something different from the other sources? If you find that a one or more of the sources you have chosen are not really needed, or that they say almost exactly what another source does, you may decide to get rid of the least useful. Once you do this, you may find that you don’t have enough sources, or that you need another source to help you with a particular area or point you want to prove. But don’t remove your original sources from your bibliography – simply add the new ones to the end (repeating steps 3-5), as well as saying which source this will replace.
7. Submit this to your tutor at least one week before your next tutorial meeting.

Unit Six: Revising & Editing The First Draft

Unit Six Activity: Peer Review of Draft of TMA

Below is the Peer Review form that we will use to edit TMAs in class. But to practise your revising skills, and to prepare your TMA draft for peer review, we suggest that you go over your TMA using this form and make any additional changes you need *before* you print out the draft you will bring to class for peer review. This way you and your TMA draft will benefit the most from this activity.

PEER REVIEW FORM FOR DRAFT OF TMA

TMA Draft Peer Review

My Name: _____

Author's Name: _____

1. **Introduction:** What technique does the author use? Does the introduction “grab” the reader’s attention? How could the introduction be improved?

2. **Thesis:** Underline the thesis statement on the TMA, then fill in the formula below:
 - a. In this TMA the author argues/demonstrates that:

 - b. Using the following sources:

 - c. This is important/interesting because (this is the “SO WHAT” part):

 - d. How could this thesis statement be strengthened?

3. Body of the TMA:

a. Topic Sentences: Does the author use proper paragraphing, and start each paragraph with a topic sentence? Underline topic sentences OR make note where there is none.

b. Evidence/Examples: Does the author provide adequate and appropriate evidence to support ideas? Note which paragraph does this best, and which needs improvement. Then suggest ways to improve the use of evidence.

c. Use of Sources/Quoting: Has the author used sources to support his/her own ideas? OR has the author let the quotes do all the work? Are quotes properly incorporated into the body of the text (in a full sentence), or do they stand alone? Is there enough discussion/analysis of quotes used? Note some places where the author has done a good job, and some places where this can be improved. Suggest what could be done to improve the TMA.

4. Conclusions: What technique does the author use? Does the conclusion accomplish the three things it should? How could the conclusion be improved?

5. Mechanics (Grammar, Spelling, Punctuation, Style, Format): Has the author produced a TMA that follows the conventions (rules) of academic writing? If not, what are the most serious problems that need to be addressed? Suggest ways the author can improve the TMA.

6. Overall impression of the TMA: In a brief paragraph (3-5 sentences) give your overall impression or opinion of the TMA. Include strengths and weaknesses, and give specific advice on how it could be strengthened. Remember – this peer review counts toward your grade in this class, and will help you when you revise your own TMA.

Unit Seven: Finalising & Submitting The Final Version

At AOU we use special forms that we attach to our TMAs in place of title pages. These forms are important because tutors use them to write feedback for your TMA.

Be sure that you fill out all required information on this form. Your tutor will explain to you how to submit your TMA electronically. You will also be asked to turn in a hard copy (printed out copy). Make sure that you also keep a copy of the final version of your TMA *just in case!*