

Colby Student Learning Outcomes for W1 Courses

The following learning outcomes (or goals) for W1 students outline Colby faculty expectations in three categories important to college-level writing. Sometimes, not all of these outcomes will apply to a particular writing project. Taken together, however, they are a guide to the writing-related skills, abilities, and practices you should develop through your W1 course and in your first year at Colby.

Argument and Evidence

As evidence of strength in this area, your writing should:

- have a debatable thesis and—if appropriate to the assignment—an original, interpretive claim
- demonstrate your awareness of the scholarly, popular, or professional conversations on the topic
- develop your ideas and analysis beyond initial claims, supported by citations as appropriate
- address implications of your argument (If what you say is true, why does it matter? To whom?)
- demonstrate your understanding of key concepts and terms from the course and subject at hand
- be free of factual errors

If your assignment requires you to use evidence from research, your writing should also:

- support all claims with evidence from germane, authoritative, and timely sources
- acknowledge and respond to counter-arguments and conflicting claims in the sources
- smoothly integrate outside sources into your arguments (e.g. use signal phrases to introduce directly quoted material OR provide brief context to frame paraphrased research)
- accurately and consistently document research sources in a format appropriate to the assignment

Organization and Structure

As evidence of strength in this area, your writing should:

- employ a discernible organizational structure appropriate to the task and subject at hand
- have an engaging introduction
- have a synthetic conclusion that goes beyond just stating or restating your subject and main findings/arguments
- use transitional phrases and topic sentences to guide readers
- use paragraphing effectively to partition claims and ideas for readers

Language and Conventions

As evidence of strength in this area, your writing should:

- employ an appropriate tone and vocabulary for the assignment
- use an appropriate format and/or design for the assignment
- show control of standardized written English (grammar, syntax, punctuation, and word choice)
- represent your authorial voice

These outcomes are, of necessity, guidelines that will be regularly revisited, measured (as appropriate and applicable), and revised to best reflect Colby students' needs and faculty goals for first-year writing experiences.