

Summer Bridge Writing: A Conversation with the Everyday, Preparing to Write Academically

Week One: "What am I going to write about?"

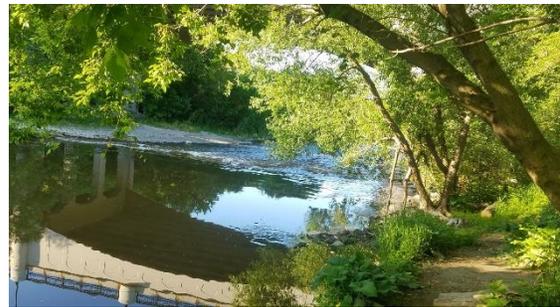
Week Two: "How do I find out more about this?"

Week Three: "How do I synthesize what I've discovered?"

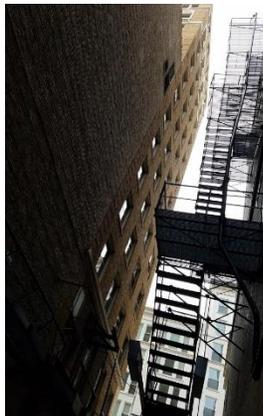
Week Four: "How do I share my findings?"

We are writing constantly. While we might not always be doing so using the written word, the way we act, the way we speak, and the way we carry ourselves within our communities all use various "languages" to communicate. Consider the clothes we wear, for example. Your outfit is one way you "write" your appearance. How you compose yourself, in other words, tells others something about yourself. Like the clothing you wear, the choices you make every day impact you and others. In this way, we communicate and have conversations without even saying or writing a single word!

The places we feel most connected to are among the most complex of these conversations. They speak to us in strange ways, asking certain things responses of us constantly. A family kitchen, a basketball court, and Instagram, for example, all have rules and etiquettes that affect the way we communicate with others in that place. Uncovering this conversation and discussing the ways it affects those participating in it (including yourself) is what we refer to as being *critical*.



During our writing, you will be exploring these familiar, everyday places to get acquainted with a method of academic writing known as *critical inquiry*. This method is based on asking questions, being open to exploration, and thinking about what we've discovered. By thinking about how places are *composed* and what sorts of *conversations* they have with us we can better see how they affect us and our communities.



The short essay you'll be responsible for this summer will be a brief introduction to academic writing using "places" as a central theme. During the process of writing this essay, we'll explore some of the fundamental skills you'll use throughout your time here at UWM (and beyond). In the first week, we'll be spending some time thinking about places that are significant to you and exploring some ways to come up with good questions. The second week will entail digging deeper into the place you've selected, using research skills to uncover more information about that place, and synthesizing that information into a short essay draft. During the third week, we'll work on composition techniques and how to incorporate images and other visual elements into your essay. Finally, you'll share your essays with the class in the fourth week and reflect on what you've discovered and your composition experience.

Your final essay will be a short pictorial essay of at least 500 thoughtful words and 6-12 images. It will consist of an introduction where you "set the stage," a central body of writing where you'll combine images and words to discuss your place, and a conclusion where you'll reflect on that place and how it communicates with you. It can be done digitally, on paper, or however you feel best represents your place.