



What the Writing and Communication Center (the WCC at MIT) does for students (undergraduate and graduate) and post-docs at MIT

The WCC at MIT offers sophisticated, professional advice to writers and speakers in all MIT departments, disciplines, and interdepartmental programs and labs. The professional advice and help that the WCC provides includes but is not limited to the following intellectual work—Analyzing Audiences, Discipline-specific Communication, Thesis/Dissertation, Publishing, Presentations, Proposals and Applications, Job Market, Course Papers, and English as Second Language. Here are some of the details.

Audience

- Analyzing the existing knowledge base and the needs of different types of readers
 - Classroom teachers in different disciplines
 - Readers of grant proposals, etc.
 - Editors of specialized journals in Engineering, Science, Architecture, Urban Planning, Management, Social Sciences, and Humanities fields
 - Editors of less specialized journals, magazines, and newspapers for a more general readership
 - Book editors and publishers
 - Conference attendees who are not in your students' subspecialty
 - Etc.
- Using that knowledge to craft effective papers and presentations for very different audiences
- Analyzing the readership of particular venues (journals, newspapers, book publishers)
- Understanding different audiences' expectations
- Writing to fulfill the needs and expectations of a particular audience

Discipline-specific communication

- Doing all the things listed under "Audience" in order to anticipate what knowledge to assume readers have, what they need to know, when they need to know it, and then to craft material using those insights
- Understanding different audience's expectations and writing to fulfill those expectations
- Incorporating data, figures, etc. into the text
- Analyzing materials in any field more profoundly

- Arguing a case more effectively
- Crafting data and evidence into compelling stories
- Deepening students' critical thinking
- Navigating **the nuances of the rhetorical situations** that all MIT students and post-docs face
 - e.g., the complex interactions among the writer's purpose, intended audience, the genre conventions and stylistic expectations of all MIT fields and disciplines
 - the varying aspects of different rhetorical situations they face in courses for disciplines other than their own
- Incorporating figures and tables in reports
- Crafting data and evidence into compelling stories
- Understanding the function of various sections
- Writing clear and meaningful abstracts
- Creating effective introductions
- Clarifying the implications of ideas
- Creating meaningful graphics and visuals
- Understanding the subtle differences between various genres (e.g., a dissertation chapter vs. an article for publication, a thesis proposal vs. a grant proposal, a course paper vs. a dissertation, an article for a general readership vs. an article in a professional journal)
- Making the style more professional
- Improving the language and syntax

Thesis/Dissertation

- Improving a thesis or dissertation in any MIT department, discipline, or interdepartmental program
- Doing all the things listed under "Audience" in order to anticipate what knowledge to assume readers have, what they need to know, when they need to know it, and then to craft material using those insights
- Developing and/or refining a thesis proposal
- Developing content for the thesis
- Incorporating data, figures, etc. into the text
- Analyzing material more profoundly
- Arguing a case more effectively
- Crafting data and evidence into compelling stories
- Understanding the function of various sections and utilizing those sections to their best advantage
- Writing clear abstracts
- Creating effective introductions
- Incorporating figures and tables in reports
- Clarifying the implications of ideas
- Creating meaningful graphics and visuals
- Analyzing any kind of text more deeply
- Making explicit the implications of data
- Making the style more professional
- Improving the language and syntax

Publishing

- Writing articles and books for publication
- Transforming a dissertation into a book
- Doing all the things listed under “Audience” in order to anticipate what knowledge to assume readers have, what they need to know, when they need to know it, and then to craft material using those insights
 - Analyzing the readership of particular venues (journals, newspapers, book publishers)
 - Understanding different audience’s expectations
 - Writing to fulfill the needs and expectations of that particular audience
- Understanding the conventions of particular journals and genres
- Crafting information into publishable material
- Turning data and evidence into compelling stories
- Creating meaningful graphics and visuals
- Creating effective arguments
- Analyzing any kind of text or data more deeply
- Arguing a case more effectively Making explicit the implications of data
- Making the style more professional
- Improving the language and syntax
- Writing winning letters of inquiry

Presentation

- Giving effective oral presentations (e.g., for class, for job talks, for interviews with potential employers and with the press)
- Doing all the things listed under “Audience” in order to anticipate what knowledge to assume readers have, what they need to know, when they need to know it, and then to craft material using those insights
- Understanding different audiences’ expectations
- Preparing for and practicing a Question-and-Answer period
- Designing effective slides
- Creating complete slide presentations with punch
- Creating meaningful graphics and visuals
- Practicing oral presentations such as
 - Classroom talks
 - Conference talks
 - Job talks
- Practicing interviewing for jobs
- Practicing being interviewed (e.g., by the press)

Proposals and Applications

- Writing **successful proposals** (thesis proposals, grant proposals, book proposals)
- Writing effective job or graduate school applications
- Doing all the things listed under “Audience” in order to anticipate what knowledge to assume readers have, what they need to know, when they need to know it, and then to craft material using those insights
- Understanding different audiences’ expectations
- Improving CVs and resumes
- Practicing job talks and interview skills

Job Market

- Writing effective letters of inquiry
- Doing all the things listed under “Audience” to understand the audience (e.g., HR personnel, potential supervisors, heads of departments) in order to anticipate what knowledge to assume readers have, what they need to know, when they need to know it, and then to craft material using those insights
- Creating impressive Teaching Statements
- Creating compelling Research Statements
- Crafting eye-catching and informative CVs and resumes
- Practicing interviews, job talks and presentations

Course Papers

- Writing lab reports in every MIT field and discipline
- Writing papers for SHASS classes
- Writing papers for classes any MIT department
- Understanding what assignments are actually requesting
- Understanding audience’s expectations (e.g., a course professor’s expectations)
- Deepening the implications of students’ ideas
- Asking provocative questions to get students to dig deeper into their own ideas
- Identifying places that require more evidence or more exploration or more experimentation
- Using critical thinking to delve more deeply into the topic and to discover more profound implications
- Clarifying and making explicit assumptions and implications
- Building on and using various types of sources

English as Second Language

- Analyzing American audiences in general
- Doing all the things listed under “Audience” in order to anticipate what knowledge to assume readers have, what they need to know, when they need to know it, and then to craft material using those insights
- Understanding audience’s expectations
- Understanding the conventions of genres in all disciplines and fields
- Improving English pronunciation
- Improving English syntax and grammar
- Improving conversation and interview skills
- Deepening understanding of American culture

The WCC at MIT is located in E39-115, 55 Hayward Street, Kendall Square (the same building that houses Rebecca’s Café). Appointments should be scheduled at <https://mit.myonline.com>