

Integrated Writing 1

Integrated writing is an extremely common task type at the university level. In fact, almost all of the writing you will do may be considered "integrated" to some degree. Integration simply means including ideas found using one or both of your receptive language skills: reading and listening. At the most basic level, when we read and respond to a text, we are using a receptive skill to inform our writing. At the more academic level of this skill, you will express an understanding both of explicit and implicit information. This may include comparing/contrasting or providing your own opinion on the topic.

Because this is such a common expectation of academic writing, you can expect to see integrated tasks in potentially any college course you enroll in. Typically a true integrated task would allow you the support of referring to the original material (or at least the notes you took) while writing. However, there may be instances when there will be a constraint of time (such as on a quiz or test).

Writing about a topic you were expected to understand and drawing connections between different sources pushes you beyond a passive understanding to recreating the essential knowledge of the course in your own words.

Although this section is about integrated writing in general, all of the writing tips in this textbook will help you with the integrated essay on the TOEFL.

Step One: Review the source material

This means that when you encounter an integrated writing prompt, you should first think about the content.

- Is there one required source material or multiple?
- Is the content written or spoken?
- How complex are the ideas presented?
- What connections can I draw between the content and other concepts discussed in this (or another) course?
- What connections are there between the various sources?
- What complexity of a response does the teacher expect?
- To what degree can I include my own opinion or background knowledge?
- Am I expected to include direct quotes/references to the text or to discuss it more abstractly?
- Is there a time limit for reviewing the source and/or writing my response?

Because integrated writing generally includes access to the source material in advance of writing and during the writing process itself, this will feel more like a drafted task.

Step Two: Organizing your ideas AND your time

Because of this task can range in the demand both in comprehension and in linguistic ability, it is understandable that this writing may require more planning and time.

First of all, an outline will *always* benefit you. You may think that the best idea is to immediately start writing, but that could lead to a very disorganized or unfocused answer. Read the prompt carefully and make a brief outline of ideas from the source(s) that are necessary to include in an answer. Ensure that you know all parts of the prompt will be addressed and all of your most important details will be included. Identify any specific phrases or sentences you would want to include verbatim.

Second, be realistic about the time you have to work on this task. Review the source material to estimate the time it will take to read or listen to it. This may include multiple reviews and/or notetaking, which will add to the overall time. Next, consult the syllabus deadlines and your other commitments to set a personal timeline for working on this project. Will you have time to write multiple drafts? Is there time to have a classmate review your writing or to visit the campus Writing Center?

It may also be necessary to adjust times depending on what is most important to the teacher. For example, there may be a larger emphasis on accuracy, so you will need to give yourself more time to revise and edit. You will also want to consider how necessary it is for you to fully grasp the concepts. In other words, if this assignment is for a core course in your major or in a particularly challenging class, it will be worth scheduling additional time. However, if the assignment is a small percentage of your total grade or for a general education course you're doing well in, it may be fine to lower the priority for reviewing and drafting this essay.

Examples of integrated writing prompts

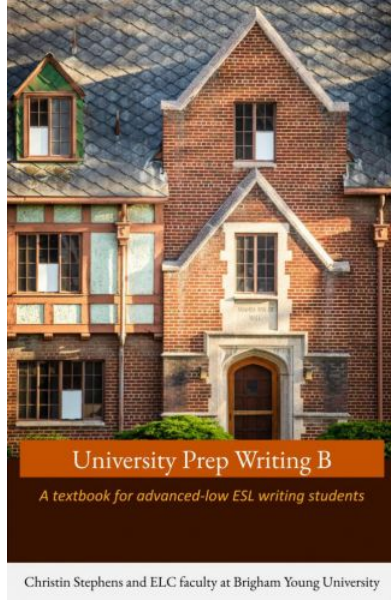
- Compare and contrast the similarities and differences in opinion between the authors of the two articles on screen time limits for children. Choose at least three aspects in your comparison. (Early childhood education)
- As part of a midterm, read the source provided and discuss if this account is trustworthy according to the points discussed in class lectures. (History)
- Analyze this stanza from a poem. What is the implied meaning? Explain this poem using the four analysis steps from the video we watched for homework about Shakespeare's sonnets. (English Literature)

1 Exercise: Integrated Writing 1

Prompt: Altitude can have a significant impact on our bodies. Using the information from the article and video, explain why altitude training can be beneficial for athletes over time. You should also explain why exercising at a high altitude can be dangerous if done incorrectly. Refer to at least one specific detail from each source in your response. Your answer should be between 250-300 words.

Click on the link below to read an article from the local Utah news, then watch the following TED Talk. You may take notes.

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