Study Notes ENGL 1101 Composition and Rhetoric At Georgia Piedmont Technical College

Access comprehensive study notes for ENGL 1101 Composition and Rhetoric at Georgia Piedmont Technical College. Review key concepts in essay writing, rhetorical analysis, research skills, grammar, and citation to prepare for assignments and exams.

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ENGL 1101: Composition and Rhetoric — Study Notes

Georgia Piedmont Technical College

These notes are organized around the two areas you specified: **Writing Analysis & Practice** and **The Revision & Editing Process**. Where GPTC-specific catalog information is sparse, I have drawn on the standard Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) course description for ENGL 1101, which is consistent across Georgia technical colleges .

Part 1: Writing Analysis and Practice

1. Rhetorical Strategies: The Modes of Writing

ENGL 1101 requires you to move beyond "just writing" into making conscious choices about **how** to develop an idea. The course covers a spectrum of modes, typically moving from exposition (explaining) to argumentation and persuasion (convincing) .

Key Modes to Master:

Mode	Purpose	Key Question It Answers	Example Use in Essay
Exposition	To explain or inform	*What does this mean? How does this work?*	Explaining a concept, process, or issue for a reader unfamiliar with it
Description	To create a sensory impression	*What does it look/feel/sound like?*	Establishing a scene in a narrative or illustrating an abstract idea concretely
Narration	To tell a story	*What happened? What did I learn?*	Personal experience essays; using a story to lead into analysis

Mode	Purpose	Key Question It Answers	Example Use in Essay
Argumentation	To take a debatable stance and defend it	*Is this claim true? Why should you accept it?*	Taking a position on a contemporary issue and supporting it with evidence
Persuasion	To move the reader to belief or action	*Why should you care? What should be done?*	Often overlaps with argumentation, but leans more on emotional and ethical appeals

Critical Distinction: Argumentation relies primarily on **logic and evidence** (logos), while persuasion may more heavily incorporate **emotional appeals** (pathos) and **credibility** (ethos) . A strong academic essay often blends both.

Study Tip: When reading an essay, identify the **dominant mode** first, then note where the writer **blends modes**. A narrative essay about a personal experience may shift into exposition to explain context, then into argumentation to draw a larger lesson.

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2. Critical Reading: Analyzing Contemporary Issues

The course explicitly focuses on "literature and articles about issues in the humanities and in society" . This means you are not just reading for content—you are reading to **deconstruct how the writer made their choices**.

What to Annotate For:

- **Thesis:** Where is the central claim stated (or implied)?
- **Evidence types:** Statistics? Anecdotes? Expert testimony? Personal observation?
- **Appeals:** Where does the writer lean on logic (logos), emotion (pathos), or credibility (ethos)?
- **Counterargument:** Does the writer acknowledge opposing views? How do they respond?
- **Assumptions:** What does the writer take for granted about the audience?

Key Skill — Inference: Critical reading requires **making inferences**—using observations from the text plus your background knowledge to reach a logical conclusion that is not explicitly stated . This is the bridge between reading and analysis.

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3. Method Evaluation: Deconstructing How Writers Write

Your syllabus asks you to understand "the specific methods of development used by other writers." This is **rhetorical analysis** in practice.

Framework for Deconstructing an Essay:

1. **Identify the claim:** What is the writer trying to accomplish?
2. **Map the structure:** How is the essay organized? Chronological? Compare/contrast? Cause/effect? Problem/solution?
3. **Locate the evidence:** What kind of support is used, and where does it appear?
4. **Analyze the appeals:** Which Aristotelian appeals are dominant, and why might the writer have chosen them for this audience?
5. **Evaluate effectiveness:** Does the method match the purpose and audience? What would you do differently?

Common Structural Patterns to Recognize:

- **Thesis → Support → Counterargument → Rebuttal → Conclusion** (classical argument)
- **Hook → Context → Thesis → Evidence → Analysis → Implications** (standard academic essay)
- **Scene → Reflection → Lesson → Broader significance** (narrative/expository blend)

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4. Composition: Drafting Unique Essays

You will write essays driven by **three sources of authority**:

Source	What It Means	How to Use It
Personal experience	Your own observations and lived experience	Use selectively; it illustrates, it does not prove
Guided observations	Structured looking at texts, events, or phenomena	Show your reader *how* you observed, not just *what* you concluded
Source-backed analysis	Evidence from credible outside sources	Integrate with analysis; do not let quotations do the thinking for you

Thesis Standards (from ENGL 1101 exam practice):

A strong thesis must be **arguable and specific** . "Pollution is bad" is weak because it is an obvious fact, not a claim someone could reasonably dispute. A stronger thesis takes a **defensible position**: *"Required first-year writing courses should emphasize revision over grammar drills"* .

Paragraph Development:

A well-developed body paragraph contains:

1. A **clear topic sentence** tied to the thesis
2. **Supporting evidence** (quotation, example, data)
3. **Analysis** connecting the evidence back to the claim
4. **Transitions** guiding the reader to the next point

Quotations should **strengthen the central idea** of a paragraph and follow explanation—they do not replace your analysis .

Part 2: The Revision & Editing Process

1. Stylistic Refining: Eliminating What Weakens Writing

Your syllabus names four specific problems to target: **jargon, choppiness, dullness, and incoherence**.

Diagnosis and Treatment:

Problem	Symptoms	Revision Strategy
Jargon	Overuse of field-specific terms; words that sound impressive but obscure meaning	Ask: *Would a smart reader outside my field understand this?* Replace with plain equivalents or define once and move on
Choppiness	Short, simple sentences in succession; lack of flow between ideas	Combine related sentences; use subordination (because, although, which); vary sentence length deliberately
Dullness	Passive voice dominance; vague verbs (is, has, does); no concrete detail	Switch to active voice; replace vague verbs with precise ones; add a specific example or image
Incoherence	Paragraphs that do not connect; ideas that jump; missing transitions	Add transitional sentences; check that each paragraph advances the thesis; use signposting ("First," "More importantly," "However")

Active vs. Passive Voice (a key stylistic marker):

- Passive: *The policy was changed by the administration.*
- Active: *The administration changed the policy.*

Active voice produces clearer, more direct prose—which is why it is preferred in academic writing unless the actor is unknown or unimportant.

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2. Grammar and Mechanics: The Non-Negotiables

ENGL 1101 includes "a review of standard grammatical and stylistic usage in proofreading and editing" . You are expected to control the errors that most damage credibility.

High-Priority Error Patterns:

Comma Splices and Fused Sentences

- **Comma splice:** Two independent clauses joined only by a comma. *"The movie was great, I really enjoyed it."*
- **Fused sentence:** Two independent clauses with no punctuation. *"The movie was great I really enjoyed it."*
- **Fixes:** (a) period, (b) semicolon, (c) comma + coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)

Comma Rules to Internalize:

- Before a coordinating conjunction **when a subject follows it**: *He loves her, but he doesn't want to spend money.*
- **No comma** before a coordinating conjunction when no subject follows: *He loves her but doesn't want to spend money.*
- After an introductory dependent clause: *Although it rains, we'll go.*
- **No comma** between subject and verb, even if you would pause in speech

Pronoun Agreement:

- *"The dog wagged their tail"* is an error when the dog's gender is known or irrelevant in a way that makes singular *their* inappropriate for formal writing . In academic prose, match singular antecedents with singular pronouns (*its*) unless using *they* deliberately for a known person.

Fragments:

- A fragment is missing a subject, a verb, or an independent clause. Check every sentence: *Can this stand alone as a complete thought?*

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3. The Revision Hierarchy: What to Fix First

Do not edit for commas before you have fixed your argument. Work in this order:

Round 1 — Global Revision (Argument & Structure)

- Does the thesis make an arguable claim?

- Does each paragraph advance that claim?
- Is there a counterargument where the assignment requires one?
- Does the conclusion do more than repeat the introduction?

Round 2 — Paragraph-Level Revision

- Is there a topic sentence?
- Is evidence integrated and analyzed, not just dropped in?
- Are transitions clear?

Round 3 — Sentence-Level Editing

- Active voice where possible
- Sentence variety (avoid choppiness and dullness)
- Remove jargon
- Check for comma splices, fragments, pronoun errors

Round 4 — Proofreading

- Read aloud
- Check quotation integration and citation format
- Verify Works Cited/formatting requirements

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4. Research and Source Integration (Brief Note)

Although your syllabus outline emphasizes analysis and revision, the standard TCSG ENGL 1101 description includes "an introduction to library resources" and a research component . Key principles:

- **Credibility check:** Author expertise + publication date + source type matter more than length or online availability
- **Primary vs. secondary sources:** A diary from the Civil War is primary; a textbook analyzing it is secondary
- **Plagiarism:** Presenting someone else's ideas or words as your own—whether intentional or accidental . Paraphrasing **with citation** is acceptable; copying without attribution is not.

Quick Self-Check Before Submitting Any Essay

- □

  Thesis is **arguable**, not a fact or question

- □

  Every paragraph has a **topic sentence** connected to the thesis

- □

  Evidence is **analyzed**, not just quoted

- □

  Counterargument is acknowledged and addressed (if required)

- □

  No **comma splices** or **fragments**

- □

  Active voice used where appropriate

- □

  No **jargon** that obscures meaning

- □

  Sentences vary in length; no **choppiness**

- □

  Transitions guide the reader between ideas

- □

  MLA (or assigned) format is correct

Note on GPTC Specifics: The GPTC catalog confirms ENGL 1101 carries 3 credit hours and requires appropriate placement scores in writing and reading . For the most current syllabus, assignment sheets, and grading policies, consult your specific instructor's course shell—individual sections may emphasize different readings or essay prompts within the standard course framework.