



THE ONLINE WRITING LAB

Main Policies and Procedures

WHAT IS THE ONLINE WRITING LAB?

The Online Writing Lab is a **free, by-appointment** digital writing center where you can schedule **up to two 45-minute appointments per week** to work with a tutor on any stage of the writing process.

WHO CAN USE THE ONLINE WRITING LAB?

Any student enrolled in an online credit course at AU, undergraduate or graduate, full or part-time, degree or non-degree, is eligible to use the Online Writing Lab. Students are permitted to make **2 appointments per week**. Each appointment is **45 minute long**.

POLICY REGARDING MISSED APPOINTMENT OR LATE CANCELLATIONS

Appointments must be **cancelled** at least **four hours before** your scheduled appointment. **Appointments cancelled less than four hours in advance are considered missed appointments (No-shows)**. The Writing Lab has a **two (2) no-shows per year policy**: after **two no-shows** (missed appointments or late cancellations), **students** will not be permitted to schedule additional appointments with the Writing Lab. Also, if you are **more than 15 minutes late** and you don't notify the ASAC, **your appointment may be given to another student on the waiting list..**

HOW DOES THE ONLINE WRITING LAB HELP STUDENTS?

A Writing Lab counselor can assist with every stage of the writing process:

- Brainstorming for your assignment
- Writing thesis statements
- Outlining an argument
- Recognizing recurrent grammatical errors
- Creating smooth transitions
- Composing polished prose

Experienced counselors evaluate drafts, identify areas for improvement, and explain strategies for effective essay structure. While they **do not offer proofreading or editing services**, they do offer advice on time management and project management techniques and provide encouragement to help students become better writers.

HOW DO I MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

To **schedule or cancel** an appointment, please go to: <https://american.mywconline.com> and click on "**Click here to register**". After logging in, you will see the schedule, which displays **available appointments** as a **white box** in each counselor's schedule in hour-long blocks. Click on the box corresponding to the appointment you are interested in, complete the form and save it. You will receive a **confirmation email** that you have successfully made an appointment. Please, follow the step-by-step instructions below to prepare for your online appointment.



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The system has also a **waiting list** function within the scheduler, which will alert students of newly open appointments. To add yourself to the waiting list for a certain day and time, click on the clock icon next to the date.

HOW DO I MODIFY OR CANCEL AN APPOINTMENT?

You can modify or cancel your appointment (see policies below regarding the timeframe) by double clicking on it and change the information inside the appointment panel. For example, you might add comments to the appointment form, modify the time if there are time slots available, or attach a file to an existing appointment.

THE ONLINE APPOINTMENT: STEP BY STEP

1. Please, open the appointment window five minutes before the appointment start. You and the counselor will both have to click on "Start or join online consultation" link (you will be joining the consultation if the counselor has already started it):

The screenshot shows a web form for scheduling an appointment. At the top, a box contains the text: "Appointment Limits: Appointments must be between 30 minutes and 1 hour in length." Below this, the form is organized into several sections:

- Time:** A section with a date "Monday, September 09:" followed by two time selection boxes. The first box is set to "12:00pm" and the second to "12:30pm", both with small clock icons.
- Meet Online?:** A dropdown menu currently set to "Yes - Meet Online". Below the dropdown is a red link that says "Start or Join Online Consultation".
- Course:** A text input field containing the word "Shakespeare".
- Instructor:** A text input field containing "Dr. Hall".
- Is this for a composition course?:** A dropdown menu set to "No".
- What would you:** A text input field containing the text "how to get started on our first major paper".

2. The document-sharing area opens up. It contains, by default, instructions (pasted below) on how to use the tools. Just select all the text and delete it.



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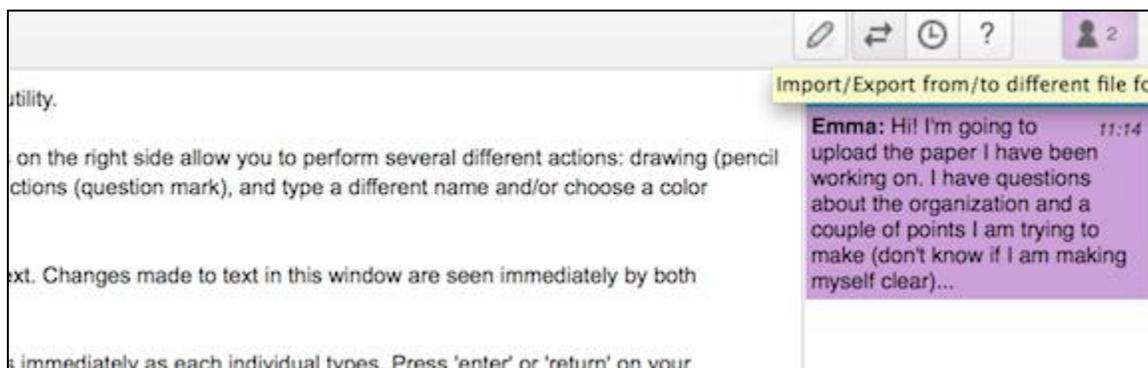


3. You can now upload a paper, in real time, into the document-sharing area. (You don't have to upload a paper in advance.)

Sharing the Assignment

You can **import** or **paste** a document (such as a paper or assignment) into the whiteboard area of the online session.

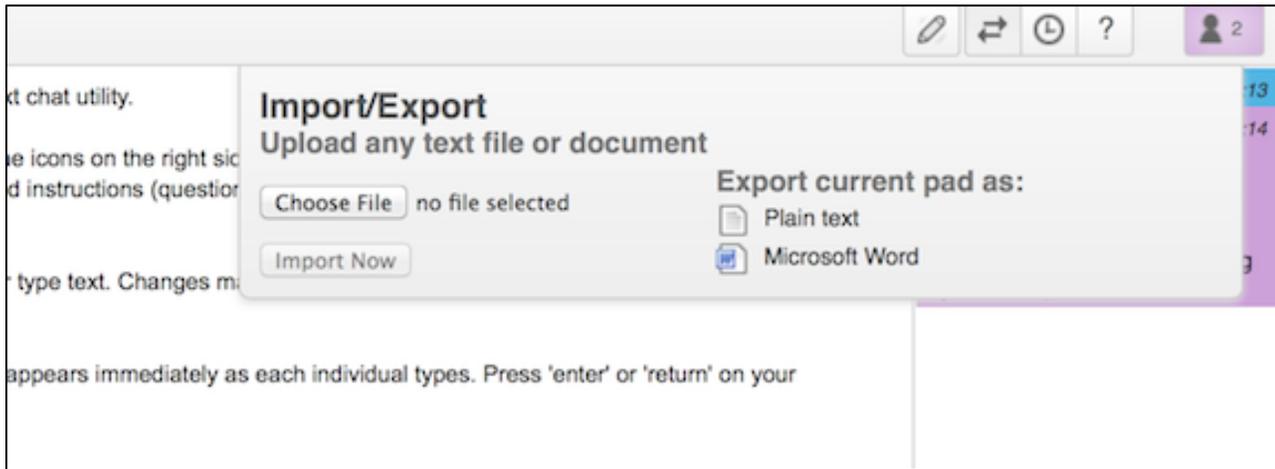
To import the assignment, click the symbol with two arrows, then choose the document on your computer, and click "Import."





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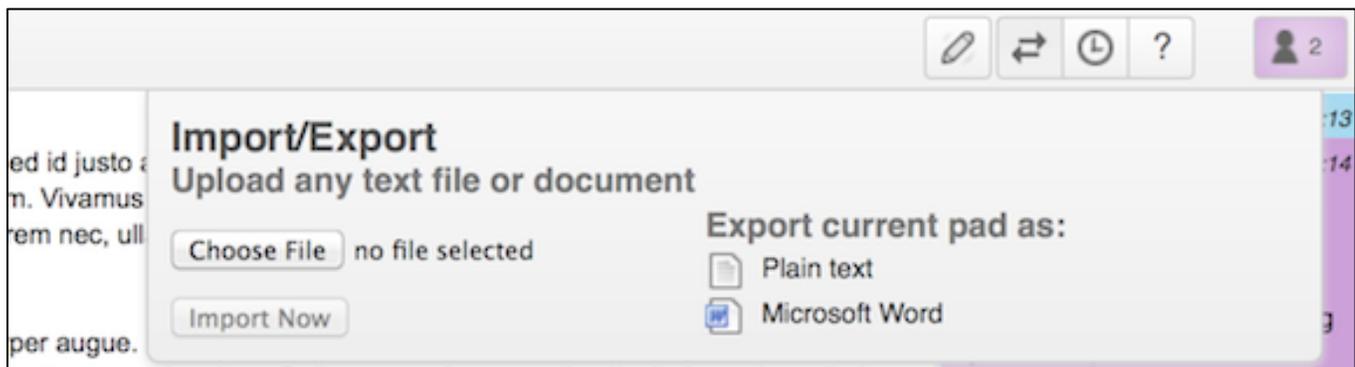


Or **simply copy and paste** your paper into the whiteboard.

Both you and the counselor can type on the document (and in the chat area) as needed. What you typed and what the counselor types will be highlighted with different colors.

Saving your Work

Export or download the document (with comments) by clicking on the two arrows again. This looks just like importing, but now you can click "plain text" or "Microsoft Word" to export in one of those two formats. The chat area, drawing, and highlighting are not shown on the exported document.



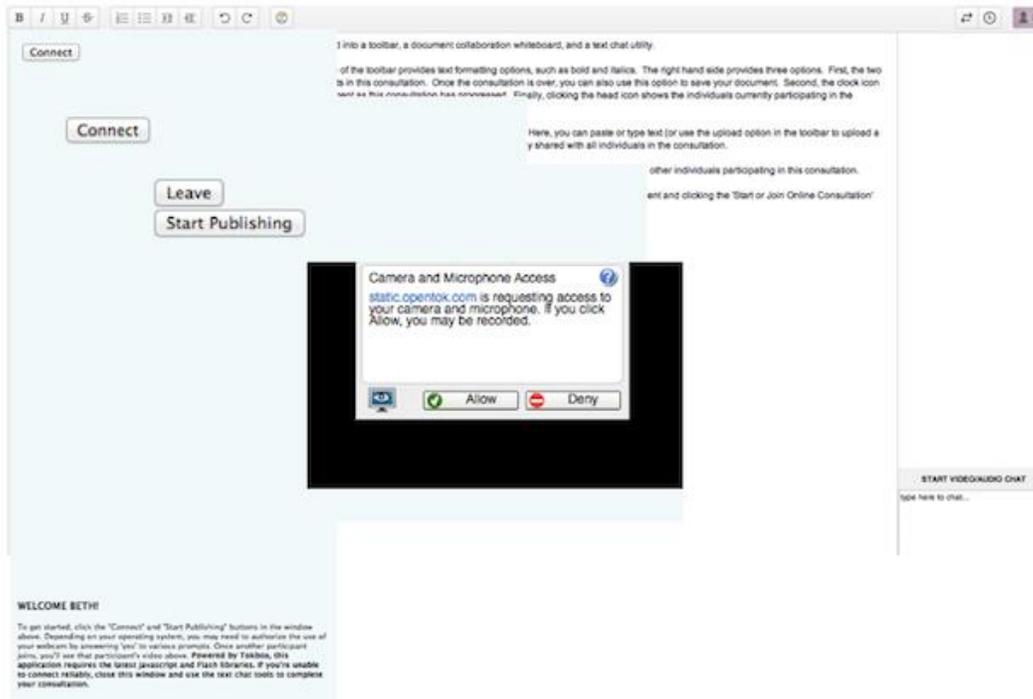
Enabling audio and video

If you have enabled audio and video, there is a link above the chat area to "start video/audio chat." To start a video chat, click on the "start video/audio chat" link, and then, in the new window, clicks on "Connect" and then "Start Publishing" and then any "allow" or "yes" or "ok" steps needed on your computer. (When you click on "Allow" in the small window, a second pop-up window may appear, at the top of your screen, depending on your browser's settings.) **The audio/video chat is displayed in a narrow window on top of the chat/document-sharing area. You can move the windows around and click on and off as needed**



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The audio/video option is compatible through any camera and microphone. Note that the audio/video module works on all browsers, on slower internet connections, and on both PCs and Macs. If a student or tutor or both is **having trouble** with only the audio and video, the student can **click on the settings icon** within the video picture frame and adjust their camera and microphone settings. If problems persist, they should complete the session using the chat area and ask for help with their computer before their next session.

After an online meeting, the student who had the meeting or an administrator can reenter the online session to "play back" or step back through time to see everything as it happened during the session. Just click on the old appointment and then on "Start or Join the Online Consultation" again. You will then be able to see your work. Also, if you click on the clock icon next to the two arrows, then on the playback sign: the changes you and the counselor made to your paper will be played back.

Whiteboard description

TOOLBAR: The toolbar is across the top of the screen. The icons on the left side allow you to work with a document's formatting, such as by making text bold. The icons on the right side provide options for using the online session and working with a document. The pencil icon opens a drawing screen, which allows you to draw on top of the whiteboard area. The two arrows icon allows you to upload a document to share the other participant in this consultation. Once the consultation is over, you can also use this option to save your document. The clock icon allows you to see a timeline or history of all of the changes to your document as this consultation has progressed. The question mark opens a section of the WCONLINE manual with general instructions for online meetings. The icon with a person symbol and a number allows you to type a different name (such as a nickname) and/or choose a color, as well as to see the name of the other participant in the session.



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WHITEBOARD: The bulk of the screen, where this text is currently located, is the document collaboration whiteboard. Here, you can import, paste or type text. Changes made to text in this window are seen immediately by both individuals participating in the online consultation.

TEXT CHAT: The right side of the screen is a text-based chat area. Type in the box at the lower right to have a text conversation. The other participant in this consultation can see your text as you type. Press 'enter' or 'return' on your keyboard to have your complete comment/question show up in the chat column.

DRAWING FUNCTION: Using the pencil icon, draw on top of the document collaboration whiteboard. Diagrams, pictures, math problems, etc. are saved within your online session but do not appear in an exported document.

VIDEO/AUDIO CHAT, IF ENABLED: Click the 'start video/audio chat' link to open a video and/or audio chat area, and then follow the steps to start using video and audio.

Even if you leave your online consultation, your chat and document session will stay here. You can always come back by viewing your appointment and clicking the 'start or join online consultation' link.

If you have any questions, click the question mark at the top right for more information.

QUESTIONS?

Please email writinglab@american.edu or call the Academic Support and Access Center at **(202)-885-3360** if you have any questions about the Writing Lab.