

Integrated Writing (Writing Process)

Integrated writing is an very common type of writing, especially in college. In fact, almost all of the writing you will do can be considered at least partially "integrated."

Integration means using your reading and/or listening skills to help you write. When we read or listen and then answer a question with writing, we are using a receptive skill to support our ideas. In academic writing, you will often need to show that you understand. Sometimes integrated writing includes comparing/contrasting or providing your own opinion on the topic.

Because this common in academic writing, you can expect to see integrated tasks in possibly any college course you have. Usually, an integrated task allows you to look at the reading or review the listening (or at least the notes you took) when you write. However, there may be times when there is a time limit (like on a quiz or test). This means that you need to understand the first time you listen/read so you can begin writing quickly.

Integrated Writing Expectations

When you start an integrated writing assignment, there are two main things to think about: source content and task.

Source Content

Because you will be summarizing, comparing, or giving an opinion about the original material, you will first need to understand the sources. In addition to main ideas and major details, think about the following questions:

- Is there one required source material or multiple?
- Is the content written or spoken?
- How complex are the ideas presented?
- How does this connect to other ideas we have talked about in this class (or another class)? Should I include these connections in my writing, or can I only write about the source content given now?
- What connections are there between the different sources?

When you read and/or listen, ask yourself some questions to make sure you get all of the necessary information:

- Who is writing? Who is the audience? Are people being discussed? (who)
- What is the main idea? What important details are included? (what)
- Is place important to this topic? (where)
- Is time important to this topic? (when)
- What purpose does the author have in saying/writing this? (why)
- How is the information organized? (how)

These are all skills you will continue to refine in your listening and reading classes. Pay close attention to the strategies you learn there and practice writing summaries of what you understood after each class period to practice this skill.

Task

The next step is to make sure you understand what you need to do with the information you get from the sources.

Questions to think about for integrated writing

- Is one source more important than another?
- Is this a comparison, summary, opinion, or cause-effect task?
- What does the teacher expect in my answer?
- 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 indirectly through summary and paraphrase?
- Is there a time limit for reviewing the source and/or writing my response?

When you can look at or listen to the sources while you write, it will feel similar to a drafted essay. The difference is that you add supporting sentences that are not *your* ideas. Those supporting ideas are from the source.

However, on the TOEFL you cannot see the sources before you write and you have a limited amount of time to understand the ideas and connect them.

Examples of integrated writing prompts

- Explain the two authors' different opinions on child care. Choose at least three points in your comparison.
- Read the newspaper article and explain if the opinion has enough strong support to convince the reader.
- Read two paragraphs from the textbook, then listen to the professor's opinion on the same topic. What reasons does the professor give for disagreeing with the reading?

Writing with Time Limits

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 simple outline of ideas from the source(s). Identify any specific words or phrases that you need to include.

Second, be realistic about the time you have to work on this task. Skim the source material to check the time it will take to read or listen to it. If the topic is complex or unfamiliar, you might want to take notes too. Next, look at the due date and your personal schedule and decide how much time you have to work 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?

You may need to use your time differently depending on what is important to your teacher. For example, sometimes grammar accuracy is very important and you need to give yourself more time to revise and edit. You will also want to consider how necessary it is for you to understand the ideas. In other words, some topics will be easy for you to write about because you are comfortable with them. You should also remember that if the assignment is a small part of your total grade, you might not want to use a lot of time working on this compared to other assignments.

Exercises

Exercise 1: Integrated Writing Practice

1. *Read the passage.*
2. *Listen to the lecture.*
3. *Summarize the points made in the lecture, being sure to explain how they challenge specific arguments made in the reading passage.*

Teachers have access to the "The Loch Ness Monster" Integrated Writing files on the ELC Curriculum Portfolio.



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Access it online or download it at https://open.byu.edu/academic_a_writing/integrated_writing_1.

