

To the student—Below is a sample of the kind of cover letter you must write as the introduction to your Local Writing Assessment Portfolio (aka Sophomore Portfolio). It has been adapted from actual cover letters submitted in previous years. Note that the letter provides a summary of each work in the portfolio and briefly appraises its strong points and weak points. Names and other details have been changed.

[Date]

Carol Guerrero-Murphy, Chair
Department of English, Theatre, and Communications

Dear Dr. Guerrero-Murphy:

Please accept the enclosed four essays as my Local Writing Assessment portfolio.

The first essay, written in my Comm Arts I class, is titled "How Not to Waste Spring Break." I wanted to show that too many students spend Spring Break in ways that are harmful and that they should put that vacation time to better use. They could volunteer for Habitat for Humanity, for example, or spend the time making new friends at a nursing home. Or they could do what I did, stay home and spend half the day relaxing and half the day getting ahead on their reading. Looking back, I can see that this essay had a great thesis and good support--but its grammar and punctuation were horrible.

The second essay is from my Comm Arts II class. I wrote it on the World Trade Center attacks. I think I made good use of my outside sources, and I did a much better job with this essay when it came to grammar and punctuation. However, as you can see from the teacher's comments, the essay did not put forth an argument like it was supposed to. In retrospect, I can see that the WTC attacks were not really a good topic for an argumentative essay, since there's no real need to convince people the attacks were terrible.

In my Eng 210 essay I tried to demonstrate that Sylvia Plath's poem "Daddy" was an excellent example of the use of metaphor and simile. I think I did a good job analyzing the metaphors in each of the poem's nine lines, but looking back on it I can't believe I missed the significance of the poem having nine lines in the first place (like the nine months of pregnancy). I think I must have cut class the day we talked about that.

My in-class writing sample is my answer to a question on my midterm exam in Development of Civ I. It's obviously not as good as the other work in this portfolio. I'm not the world's best speller, and when I don't have access to spell-check things get kind of rocky. I'm working on it, however.

Thank you for accepting my portfolio. I hope you enjoy reading it.

Sincerely,

Jane S. Ophomore