



Students: How to Use SMARTHINKING's Online Writing Lab (OWL)

SMARTHINKING's Online Writing Lab (OWL) is a great resource for student writers at all levels and in many disciplines. You can use the OWL for essays for your English class or any other class that has a written component, such as Sociology or Marketing. If you use the OWL regularly throughout the semester, your writing can improve by the end of term. Once you've used the OWL once, we hope you'll return and build on what you've learned!

The OWL offers four basic types of service:

1. *Essay Center:* The Essay Center lets you send an essay draft to an e-structor for response.
 - E-structors will provide you with specific responses to your writing, will probe your thinking with questions, and will offer some advice for strengthening your next draft.
 - In addition to having access to general writing tutors, you can ask for help from specialists in business/technical writing, creative writing, and ESL.
 - Your paper will be returned to your SMARTHINKING homepage Inbox generally within 24-32 hours and guaranteed within 72 hours. Also, the system will send an email letting you know that the paper is done.
 - You can access the "Essay Center" from your SMARTHINKING homepage by clicking on the "Submit Your Writing" icon. Fill in required course and assignment information, and select the kinds of help you want. Then, attach your paper to the submission form.
2. *Live Writing Center:* The Live Writing Center lets you work one-to-one in "real time" with e-structors.
 - You can ask an e-structor for help in developing an idea, a thesis, content, and in organizing your ideas. You can also ask an e-structor for help with grammar issues such as punctuation, run-on or fragmented sentences, and phrasing.
 - The e-structors will work with you both on a "whiteboard," which resembles a chalkboard that both you and the tutor work on.
 - You can access the "Live Writing Center" from your SMARTHINKING homepage by selecting "Writing (all subjects)" from the pull-down menu below the "Connect With an E-structor Now" icon.
3. *Submit a Question:* The Submit a Question area lets you ask questions on the whiteboard and submit them to an e-structor for an offline response usually within 24 hours.
 - E-structor responses offer probing questions and explanations to your questions.
 - To ask a question, select "Writing (all subjects)" from the pull-down menu beneath the "Submit a Question" icon. You can ask a question by typing it on the whiteboard and then clicking "Submit" to send it. Later, you can find a response in your SMARTHINKING homepage Inbox.
4. *Student Writer's Handbooks:* The OWL offers students unlimited access to its student writers' handbooks, which contain interactive learning modules focused on the writing process.
 - To access the "Student Writer's Handbook," go to your SMARTHINKING homepage and click on "Academic Resources." Select "Subject Specific Study Guides" and then, using the pull down menu, select the "SMARTHINKING Writer's Handbook" or—for ESL students—the "SMARTHINKING ESL Writer's Handbook."