

# Undergraduate Peer Writing Tutor Application Packet

## AY 2023-24

Application Deadline: Wednesday, January 25th at 2:00pm CST

### Position Description:

The Writing Program is accepting applications from second- and third-year students in the College for the position of Peer Writing Tutor.

In individual tutorial meetings like those offered by College Core Writing Tutors, Peer Writing Tutors provide writing support to undergraduate students enrolled in Common Core courses. Peer Writing Tutors are not copyeditors or proofreaders; instead, they help writers improve their skills in analyzing and revising academic writing.

Peer Writing Tutors work one, two or three 4-hour shifts (as they choose), for example, Sundays and Wednesdays 6:00-10:00pm.

### Training:

Successful applicants will be awarded a seat in our quarter-long, credit-bearing training course: a dedicated Peer Writing Tutor section of ENGL 13000: Academic and Professional Writing (Little Red Schoolhouse) in Spring 2023. Successful completion of the training course is required in order to begin working in Autumn 2023.

### Supervision:

In the first quarter of work, Peer Writing Tutors will be supervised by a Writing Program Assistant Director and mentored by an advanced graduate student Writing Tutor. At the end of their first quarter, each Peer Writing Tutor will create and submit a teaching portfolio that includes student evaluations and a personal statement in which they reflect on their pedagogical practices.

### Compensation:

Peer Writing Tutors are compensated at \$15.40 per hour.

### Term of Appointment:

Peer Writing Tutors train in Spring 2023, begin working in Autumn 2023, and upon satisfactory performance, they can continue working in Winter 2024 and beyond.

## Application Components and Procedure

The Peer Writing Tutor Application has two components.

**A. Submit at least one letter of recommendation from a University of Chicago faculty member, instructor, Writing Intern or Writing Specialist.**

The letter of recommendation should be from someone who is familiar with your writing at UChicago and how you communicate in the classroom. Please ask your letter writer to send their recommendation via email to [writing-program@uchicago.edu](mailto:writing-program@uchicago.edu) by the application deadline (Friday, January 27th at 2:00pm CST).

**B. Prepare the six materials below. Then, submit them on the Writing Program website by the application deadline. All six materials must be submitted at the same time.**

1. **Unofficial copy of transcript**

2. **Personal statement**

In 1 page (single-spaced), please let us know about your writing and revision experiences, your approach to writing, and/or anything else you think relevant.

3. **Personal statement cover sheet** (included in this packet)

4. **Writing sample**

4-7 page paper (double-spaced) from one of your courses at UChicago. You are welcome to submit a portion of a longer paper. Do not put your name on the writing sample.

5. **Writing sample cover sheet**

Included in this packet. Do not put your name on the cover sheet.

6. **Comment on sample student paper**

A sample student paper is included in this packet. Copy the sample student paper into a separate Word file, comment upon it (further directions are found in the sample paper), and submit it with the rest of your application on our website. Do not put your name on this document. If Microsoft Word automatically inserts your name anywhere on the file, rest assured that we will take care to anonymize it.

When these six items are assembled, submit them here:  
<https://writing-program.uchicago.edu/jobs/pwtapplication/>

## Forms for Application Materials

### Cover Sheet One: Personal Statement Cover Sheet

Please create a copy of this cover sheet as a separate Word file and submit it with your other application materials.

<b>Your first name:</b>	<b>Your last name:</b>	<b>Your email:</b>

<b>Recommender's name and email:</b>

### **Personal Statement**

In 1 page (single-spaced), let us know about your writing and revision experiences, your approach to writing, and/or anything else you think relevant. You may paste your statement below or include it in a separate document.

## Cover Sheet Two: Cover Sheet for Writing Sample

Office Use Only: Application number \_\_\_\_\_

Please paste this cover sheet to the beginning of your writing sample. To allow us to judge this portion of your application anonymously, **please do not include your name on this cover sheet or the writing sample itself.**

1. Is your submission (part of) a:

\_\_\_ paper for coursework \_\_\_ thesis \_\_\_ journal article \_\_\_ conference paper  
\_\_\_ other: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Please provide a brief synopsis of the piece you have submitted: what is your overall argument, and/or what are the main points that you're trying to communicate to your readers?

3. Is this an excerpt of a larger project? If so, how does it fit into the larger project?

4. Who are your intended readers? What disciplines are you writing for, and what might your imagined audiences care about? [For example: perhaps you're writing for a Sociology audience, but also for a more interdisciplinary audience of scholars interested in urban studies.]

5. What about the piece are you most happy with?

6. Few writers believe their writing is perfect. You may feel that a central concept eluded description, or that a key paragraph escaped all bounds of rational structure, or that a sensitive issue might not have been framed in the best possible way. In a paragraph or less, please tell us what about this piece gave you the most difficulty as a writer.

## Sample Student Paper for Commenting

To submit your comments, you'll need to copy this sample student paper into a separate Word file and submit it with the rest of your application on our web site. Please make sure all of your comments are included. Do not put your name on this document.

Put yourself in this situation: You told this student (“Jamie”) that you would read and comment on their paper and e-mail it back to them. As you respond, limit yourself to 60 minutes.

We ask that you offer feedback that stands on its own (as opposed to deferring your remarks to a hypothetical meeting by saying “let’s talk about this”). Don’t feel that you need to demonstrate to us everything you know about writing; likewise, this is not a copyediting test. We are more interested in what you would do to support this student’s growth as a writer. Respond as fully as you wish, but remember, you have only 60 minutes.

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### *Balance of Power*

In the Iliad, Zeus is described as by far the mightiest and wisest of the gods. The will of Zeus determines the events which occur throughout the war. In many instances, however, one finds evidence that this gap between the power of Zeus and the other Olympians is not nearly as wide as it is said to be. Not only do the other gods defy, trick, and resist Zeus, but at times they do so easily, and without showing any great fear of being caught and incurring his wrath. In some of his interactions with the other gods, especially those with Hera, Zeus clearly seems like the weaker of the two, and his wife easily fools and manipulates him. One must even question the strength of his will, since he cannot even easily control the actions of mortals all the time. That Zeus reigns over gods and men as the strongest being in the universe is clear, but it is doubtful whether the extent of his power is as great as he himself and others say. Through his interactions with mortals and the other gods, one sees that the power of Zeus, though said to be by far the greatest of all, is rather more limited in his power; and that the idea of a single supreme being is absent from the Homeric world, the power of heaven being more delicately balanced.

When the poet describes Zeus as the one “who rules the world,” (Illiad.15.443) he makes clear that Zeus is the master of all other beings. When Zeus himself, after ordering the other gods not to interfere in the war, says “you can never drag me down from sky to earth, not Zeus, the highest, mightiest king of kings...But whenever I’d set my mind to drag you up, in deadly

earnest, I'd hoist you up with ease, you and the earth, and the sea all together...that is how far I tower over the gods," (8.23-24, 26-28, 31) he shows that he believes his power is infinitely greater than the power of all the other gods. However, Zeus' strength is not great enough to terrify the other gods into obeying him. When the poet says that Poseidon "surging in secret out of the gray surf went driving into the Argive ranks and lashed them on, and his churning outrage rose against great Zeus," (13. 408-411) he reveals that the other gods are willing to disobey Zeus for the sake of accomplishing their own ends. Poseidon acts in secret so as to stop Zeus from physically preventing him from going down to the Argives. However, he still runs the risk of being caught, and he is willing to take that chance. When Iris rebukes him for his actions, he even dares to deny that Zeus has the right to give him orders, and that Zeus' honors are greater than his own (15. 220-234).

Zeus is not only stronger than the other gods, but wiser than they are as well. Menelaus, crying out "Zeus, Father Zeus, they say you excel all others, all men and gods, in wisdom clear and calm," (13.727-728) reveals that all attribute Zeus with the greatest knowledge. Hera, however, tricks him easily, and makes him believe her lies with almost no effort. When Hera, having seen Poseidon fighting for the Argives, seduces Zeus into turning away from the war so they can make love, Zeus has no inkling that he is being tricked. Upon awaking, he sees what has happened, and chastises Hera. Replying "Never by will of mine did the god of earthquakes wreak havoc among the Trojan ranks and Hector and surge to help their foes...Not I...why I'd be the first to counsel him to take your lead, Zeus, wherever you command, my king of the black cloud," (15.52-54, 57-59), she confidently lies to and flatters him, showing no sign of fear. When Zeus answers "Excellent Hera. Now, if in the years to come you will accord with me...Poseidon, bent as he is to go his own way, must change at once and wrench his will to ours," (15. 63-64, 66-67) one sees that in only a few lines Hera has managed to completely dupe the wisest of all the gods.

Zeus' will is the force which drives the events of the war and decides the fates of men. The poet establishes this early on, when he calls the many Argive deaths "the will of Zeus...moving towards its end." (1.6) Zeus decrees the fates of the Greeks and the Trojans with his sacred scales (8.81-87). However, everything Hera and Poseidon accomplish while Zeus sleeps goes directly against his will. Even a mere mortal can come close to resisting the will of Zeus. When the poet tells us that Diomedes, tempted to try to kill Hector even though Zeus favors him, "was torn two

ways—he'd half a mind to turn the team and take him face to face... Three times Tydides was tempted, heart and soul, three times from the crags of Ida Zeus let loose his thunder, the Master Strategist handing down a sign to the Trojans," (8.190-194) he shows that even the will of a mortal can make a stand against the will of Zeus. Only after three attempts does Zeus finally over power Diomedes' heart, and force him to turn back. Zeus' will may be the strongest, but he does not accomplish his ends easily.

The fact that Zeus can at times be easily defied and resisted by the other gods, and that his will can be challenged by a mere man, shows that his dominance over gods and men is not as great as it is said to be. Zeus is indeed the strongest of all, but the extent of his supremacy is not so great that he can easily control the outcome of the war. Instead, he must work to keep men and the other gods in check. With Zeus as the example of the mightiest being in the Iliad, one sees that the idea of a truly supreme being is absent from the Homeric world. Zeus is undoubtedly the leader, but the distribution of power is not as one-sided as it is said to be. Rather, power within the Homeric divine world is portioned out more evenly, with different gods asserting themselves at different times. Even Zeus has a little trouble making the war turn out the way he wants.

## Contacts and Further Information

Your writing sample and feedback on the sample student paper will be scored by two Writing Program staff who will know you only by your assigned number.

If any portion of our application is not accessible for you, please let us know.

We will be holding two information sessions in Winter Quarter regarding the Peer Writing Tutor opportunity with the Writing Program. Click on the links below to register in advance for one of our sessions:

[Wednesday, January 11th from 4:30pm – 5:30pm over Zoom](#)

[Friday, January 20th from 11:00am – 12:00pm over Zoom](#)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting at that date.

Questions? Contact us:

[writing-program@uchicago.edu](mailto:writing-program@uchicago.edu)

Deputy Director, Kathy Cochran  
Senior Associate Director, Tracy Weiner  
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