

Collaborative Writing Help Handout

According to Alred, Brusaw, & Oliu, “Collaborative writing occurs when two or more writers work together to produce a single document for which they share responsibility and decision making authority” (2009). When writing an academic paper with a group, you must keep several things in mind. First, be aware that each collaborator has different information and opinions to contribute. Second, assign roles to each person in the group, so that all are aware that to achieve the best results they must work together. Third, have one person to set a schedule and be aware of the limited amount of time you will have while working on this project. Good, realistic planning and timely execution often lead to success. And finally, the entire group must define and debate the issues being discussed so that each collaborator has an idea of what needs to be argued in the paper.

Writing Roles (everyone should alternate, so that each person participates equally):

1. Brainstormer – Everyone should participate in this activity.
2. Drafter – This person sits at the computer or with the paper and pen and does the primary writing.
3. Reviewer – This person will read what the other person has written to identify and examine paragraph focus, idea arrangement, development. This is best done when the reviewer reads **out loud** to the group!
4. Editor – This person will do grammar check, review source integration, check formatting.

There will be a few steps that you will have to go through as your group works on the paper.

1. Planning- Before the document can be produced, the group members must plan out the paper and its focus. Ask questions like, “Who will be reading it and why?” and “What should our audience expect to learn from this?”
2. Research- The topic you choose will most likely require more information. Therefore, your group must begin to research the project using online databases, libraries, the internet, and other various media channels.
3. Brainstorming and Compiling the Rough Draft- Once the research is done, your group should be able to use what information you have gathered to brainstorm and freewrite ideas for your paper. Try writing your thesis together and develop an organization or outline for the whole paper together.
4. Revision- Group members should work together to evaluate the document and to make suggestions about its content. Read the paper out loud together and discuss whether or not each idea, sentence, and paragraph connects to the ones around it.

Be sure each collaborator understands his or her writing tasks should be completed by each meeting. If you can't attend, call in, or e-mail your comments ahead of time. For each meeting, have two or more note-takers who keep track of what is said and who can compare notes after

References

Alred, G., Brusaw, C., & Oliu, W. (2009) *The Business Writer's Handbook*. 9th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins.

Lunsford, A. Collaboration, control, and the idea of a writing center. *The Writing Center Journal* 12(1), 3-10.

the fact. These notes will be used to draft, revise, and edit the paper. Write the document together, so that it doesn't adopt one person's voice, or multiple voices. Read the paper out loud together and discuss whether or not each idea, sentence, and paragraph connects to the ones around it. As you work together, expect to experience some disagreement. However, if all group members show mutual respect for one another and have a positive attitude the differences should be resolved quickly and without much effort.

References

Alred, G., Brusaw, C., & Oliu, W. (2009) *The Business Writer's Handbook*. 9th ed. Boston: Bedford/St. Martins.

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