

Writing in Large Classes: Tips on Grading Papers

We all know writing is invaluable for student learning, but what do you do when you are teaching large classes and don't want to spend all your time grading papers? This handout offers you some tips and suggestions.

- I. For informal, short writing assignments, for instance, *reactions*, *summaries*, *counter arguments* to readings in or out of class, or *journals* in which students reflect on what they have learned or things they do not understand from a given chapter:
- II.
 - simply check off as completed
 - identify common issues and then discuss them verbally with the whole class or distribute them to the class in a handout
- III. For longer, more formal writing assignments, for instance, essays:
 - When you introduce the writing assignments:
 - first, to save time for your grading, you should clearly explain the expectations of each writing assignment before students' writing: length requirement, coverage, organization, for instance;
 - if possible, provide a sample, too;
 - clarify your grading criteria, and let students know what is important to you: clear thesis, logical presentation, concise language, for instance.
 - When you grade the writing assignments:
 - if you handwrite, you can use symbols or abbreviations to save time;
 - if you type, you can have a saved document with common suggestions, corrections, and encouragements, which you can copy and paste as comments and customize them for each student's work as needed;
 - either you handwrite or type your comments, you can identify common issues and then discuss them verbally with the whole class or distribute them to the class in a handout.

Adapted from:

Kathleen McKinney. *Writing in large classes: Don't be overwhelmed with grading*, from <http://www.cat.ilstu.edu/additional/tips/wrtLarge.php>.

Mona Quinn. *Grading Student Writing: Tips for the over-worked and under-confident*, from <http://www.thewritingsite.org/articles/vol2num3b.asp>.

Raven Lebeau. *Teaching tips: How to save time grading writing assignments*, from <http://www.helium.com/tm/689518/ideally-teachers-would-emphasize>.