



JPTSS

The Journal of Peer Tutoring
in Secondary Schools

JPTSS Editorial Style Guide – AUTHOR VERSION

This style guide is not comprehensive.

For any additional questions, consult the MLA Handbook, 9th edition.

MANUSCRIPT FORMATTING

General Formatting

- **Font:** Times New Roman, 12 pt
- **Spacing:** Double-spaced
- **Indentation:** Use normal indentation throughout the paper, except directly after any title and heading. There is no indentation directly after titles and headings.

Titles and Headings

Paper Title

- **Article Title:** Bolded, centered
- **Author Byline:** Centered. The institution name should be italicized, and the state abbreviation must be included.
Example: Amber Jensen, *Brigham Young University (UT)*

Heading Levels

- **Level 1:** Bold, centered (e.g., paper title, major section headings, Works Cited)
- **Level 2:** Bold, left-aligned
- **Level 3:** Bold, left-aligned, italicized

Title Capitalization

- Use MLA title case for all titles and headings.

Block Quotations

- For quotations spanning more than three lines (or roughly 40 words), use block quote formatting by indenting the entire block of text.

Figures and Tables

- **Titles:** All figures and tables must be numbered sequentially within the article and have a title. Table and figure titles should be bold and end in a period.
Example: ***Table 1.** Data from Study; **Fig. 1.** Writing Center*
- **Positioning:**
 - Titles of tables and figures go *above* the visual, while optional captions (i.e., notes, p-values, table citations, etc.) appear *below* tables.
 - For figures, optional captions or descriptions will appear in a line below the figure title.
 - Any figure citations or attributions will appear below the figure. They should both be left aligned.
- **Alignment:** All table cells should be left-aligned to the top of the table.
- **NOTE: Before publication,** authors will need to email (jptss.editor@gmail.com) a separate digital file (.jpg or .svg) for each graphic, image, and photograph (including author headshots) to be included in their article. All images or figures need to be 300 dpi or higher.

Citations and Appendices

- **Hanging Indent:** All citations should use a hanging indent.
- **Appendices:** Titles of appendices should use title case before the colon; any subheadings should use sentence case.
Example: *Five Sources of Data: Provided by students in ELING 350*

Footnotes

- We generally discourage the use of footnotes.
- **Formatting:** Do not indent footnotes. They should be single-spaced.
- **Numbering:** Include the number, but do not use superscripts in footnotes.
Example: *1. See Benson's study on peer tutoring for more information.*

Abbreviations and Acronyms

- **Uppercase Acronyms:** Acronyms and abbreviations using only uppercase letters should not have spaces or periods unless they are partial initials of a name.
Examples: *JPTSS*, SOL, FDR
- **First Instance:** When an acronym is used for the first time, the full expanded form should follow in parentheses.
Examples
CAPTA (Capital Area Peer Tutoring Association) or *Edison Writing Center (EWC)*

Contractions and First Person

- First person is appropriate for most articles, as the author's role/perspective will likely be central to their argument. First person can make articles easier to read and thus more accessible to the audience of *JPTSS*.
- Contractions are allowed for most articles, especially those written in first person with a narrative structure. Contractions may be unadvised in some *JPTSS* research articles.

Treatment of Names

- **Full Name:** When mentioning a person for the first time, use their full name. Subsequent references should use the last name only.
Example: *Henry Warren* and later *Warren*.
- **Identifying Authors in a Multi-authored Piece:** If there are more than one author of an article, and there is a need to distinguish between authors or describe who "we" is, you can use parenthesis to indicate authors by their first names.

Example: Two of us (Annie and Lucy) were PWSC tutors when we The other two members of our research team (Amber and Jenny) have both made the opposite transition. . . .

Example: At the start of the 2022-2023 school year, we (Jimmy and Sarah) joined a new group of student tutors. . . .

- **Writing Centers:** The full name of the writing center should be used for the first reference, followed by the acronym in parentheses. Subsequent references should use the acronym only.
Example: *The Herndon Writing Center (HWC)*

Inclusive Language

- Use they, them, and their for unspecified or unclear genders.
- Avoid gender-specific job titles.

Examples: firefighter, chairperson, police officer

- Not: *fireman, chairwoman, policeman*
-

CITATIONS: MLA FORMAT

In-Text Citations

- **Format:** Use the MLA format (Author Last Name page number).
Example: (Benson 39)

Works Cited

- Use the MLA format for citations
- Make sure all digitally-accessible citations (e.g., journal articles or websites) have clickable hyperlinks to sources and DOIs, as the journal will be posted online. Make sure none of the links are broken. Ensure that all links do not include https://.
 - www.ed.gov *not* <https://www.ed.gov>

Fostering Creative Writing and Community in the Secondary School Writing Center

Jane Doe, *Brigham Young University (UT)*

As the editor of *The Journal of Peer Tutoring in Secondary Schools*, I find myself privileged to engage with a diverse set of articles that represent the breadth and depth of secondary school writing center work. These articles come from high school students, college tutors, teacher-directors, and academics, capturing the ever-evolving landscape of writing centers in 2025. Each one offers a unique reflection, study, or intervention that showcases the creativity and resourcefulness of the secondary school writing center community. And yet, amidst the research, reflections, and theory, it is the stories of creativity—especially in fostering creative writing—that resonate with me most.

As a former high school writing center director, I understand how difficult it can be to carve out time for creative pursuits, especially in a world where the pressure to improve academic writing often dominates. When tutoring sessions are filled with preparing essays, revising research papers, and helping with grammar, it is easy for the creative voices of students to be overlooked. However, I believe that creativity is at the heart of the writing center, and it is something that needs to be nurtured just as much as any other aspect of writing.

Richard Byrd, in *Writing Centers and Creative Expression: Rewriting the Narrative*, emphasizes the transformative role that writing centers can play in fostering creativity:

Writing centers are not just spaces for academic writing; they are places where students can experiment with their voice, explore unconventional forms of expression, and push the boundaries of traditional writing. By embracing creative expression, writing centers create an environment where students can engage with writing in ways that are deeply personal and profoundly empowering. (Byrd 112)

This paper aims to explore ways secondary school writing centers can incorporate and celebrate creative writing as part of their broader mission to support students in their writing endeavors. By focusing on creativity, we not only provide a space for personal expression but also foster a sense of community and belonging within our centers. Below, I offer a few strategies for encouraging creative writing and building a supportive environment for writers, drawing inspiration from both my experience as a teacher and my continued work as an academic editor.

Writing Prompts and Creative Challenges

One effective way to encourage creative writing in a writing center is by providing students with prompts and challenges that push them to think outside the box. Writing challenges can provide students with a fun, low-pressure way to experiment with writing and generate new ideas. Table 1 below provides a sample of creative writing prompts and the potential outcomes of using such prompts.

Table 1: Sample Creative Writing Prompts and Outcomes

Prompt Type	Example Prompt	Outcome
Narrative Challenge	"Write a short story about a character who can time travel."	Encourages the creation of imaginative plotlines and character arcs.
Character Development	"Describe a character who is afraid of the dark."	Enhances skills in building complex characters with depth.
Poetry Prompt	"Write a poem using only 5 random words."	Stimulates creative thinking with a focus on wordplay and structure.

Perspective Shift	"Write a scene from the perspective of an inanimate object."	Pushes students to think outside the box, exploring unique viewpoints.
--------------------------	--	--

Collaborative Writing and Group Storytelling

Another key aspect of creative writing in the secondary school writing center is the sense of community and collaboration that can be created through group storytelling. Writing can often feel like an isolating activity, but when students work together to craft a story or poem, the process becomes more dynamic and fun. Figure 1 below demonstrates a collaborative story-writing activity that involves multiple participants contributing to the same narrative.¹

Figure 1: Collaborative Round-Robin Writing Process

This figure illustrates how a group of students can participate in round-robin writing, with each student contributing one sentence at a time to create a collaborative narrative.

Conclusion

Fostering creativity in the secondary school writing center is essential to cultivating a well-rounded and engaged community of writers. By offering creative prompts, collaborative activities, and spaces to reflect on and celebrate creative work, writing centers can empower students to find their voices, express themselves, and build confidence in their abilities. As we continue to support students in their academic writing, let’s also make room for their creative expression, creating a balanced environment where all forms of writing are valued.

1. In a round-robin writing activity, students take turns adding one sentence to a story, leading to unexpected twists and turns in the narrative.

Jane Doe is a seasoned educator and one of the editors of *The Journal of Peer Tutoring in Secondary Schools*. With over a decade of experience in secondary education, she has worked as a writing center director at multiple schools, cultivating environments that foster student writers' growth. She currently teaches composition and writing center theory at a large public university, where she continues to mentor future educators and advocate for innovative tutoring practices in secondary schools.

Works Cited

- Byrd, Richard. *Writing Centers and Creative Expression: Rewriting the Narrative*. Writing Centers Press, 2021.
- Jensen, Amber. *Creative Writing in Secondary Education: A Handbook for Tutors*. 2nd ed., Writing Center Publications, 2023.
- . "Writing for Personal Expression: The Role of Writing Centers in Fostering Creativity." *Journal of Secondary Writing Centers*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2022, pp. 88-99.
- Smith, Jessica. *The Importance of Peer Tutoring in the Creative Writing Process*. University Press, 2020.

Appendix

"Reflect on a recent tutoring session where you worked with a student on their writing. Consider the following questions in your response:"

What was the primary goal of the tutoring session?

How did you adapt your approach based on the student's needs?

What strategies did you use to make the session more interactive?

Reflect on one challenge you encountered during the session and how you overcame it.

How do you feel the student benefitted from your tutoring?

What will you do differently in your next session?