**English Proficiency Notice to English 102 Students** *(Revised, 2003)*

**Policy Statement**
To pass English 102, all students will be required to submit a passing English Proficiency portfolio containing samples of writing done for the course and an essay exam given during the final exam period.

**Portfolio**
The portfolio is a folder containing three pieces of your writing and a proficiency exam. The purpose of the portfolio is to allow graders to judge your writing using a variety of your best out-of-class and in-class work. The portfolio—except for the exam—will be collected by your teacher by the last class meeting.

**Specifications:** *(Portfolios which do not follow these specifications may be failed)*
- Use a light-colored, double-pocketed folder with your “W number” and teacher’s code name on the outside.
- Make sure that your name and your teacher’s name appear nowhere in the portfolio.
- Include three pieces of writing (defined below) in the right-hand pocket and the exam in the left pocket.
  * Sample papers must be typed. Top copy must be clean (no marks by teacher). Drafts must be attached.
  * At least one paper must contain a “Works Cited” page corresponding to citations in that paper.
  * “Introduction to Research” must follow directions below and refer by title to a paper in the portfolio.
  * Proficiency exam must demonstrate an ability to document sources correctly using MLA format.

**Portfolio Contents:**
- **Two Sample Papers:** The two papers that you select should represent your best writing for the course. Clean revisions, containing no teacher’s comments or marks, must be stapled on top of original graded papers and all drafts. You are discouraged from submitting short exercises or papers that only summarize a work. Critical, analytical, and argumentative essays of at least 500 words are preferred. Both writing samples must be on different writing assignments (not two versions of the same assignment). Do not include extremely lengthy research papers. Papers should demonstrate an ability to use and document outside sources; at least one paper must have a “Works Cited” page.
  * **Introduction to Research:** Assume that the Freshman English Office is creating a handbook for incoming English 102 students and that you’ve been asked to contribute an essay on problems and solutions in writing papers requiring research. You’re asked to identify a few of the problems you’ve encountered in writing one particular research paper, then to focus on the one problem you felt was the most significant. Explain why it was the most significant problem, how you went about solving the problem, whether you succeeded, and what lesson(s) you learned from dealing with this research problem that you can pass on to other students. Make sure that what you write reads like a focused, developed, multi-paragraphed essay and that you refer by title to one paper that required research which you include in your proficiency portfolio. Submit a single-spaced, typed, one-page essay approximately 500 words long.
- **The Proficiency Exam:** Its purpose is to demonstrate your skill at writing a timed essay and in documenting sources using MLA style. The exam is taken in a “blue book” which you will purchase and bring to the Freshman English exam. See the sample exam on the back of this page.

**Criteria for Evaluation**
A minimum of two trained graders other than your teacher will judge your portfolio’s proficiency. A portfolio is “proficient” if it demonstrates that you have met the generic goals of English 102. Thus, a portfolio should demonstrate skills in writing, reading, and critical thinking; an ability to write on various subjects for different audiences and purposes; an ability to use research in writing; and evidence of planning and revision processes leading to final drafts. Individual pieces of writing should consistently do the following: state a thesis clearly; develop a thesis logically and in sufficient detail; use well-formed sentences and paragraphs; use language appropriately and effectively; follow standard practices in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

**Pass:** “Competent or Adequate.” Portfolio consistently demonstrates proficiency in argumentation, research, and writing. Writing is characterized by clarity of purpose and recognition of audience as well as by ability to plan, focus, organize, develop, revise, and document essays. Mechanical errors do not impede reading. Also, the student follows specifications above: typed, clean final copies; all drafts attached; a Works Cited page corresponding to citations in one of the included papers; proper “Introduction”; and correct parenthetical MLA documentation in proficiency exam.

**Fail:** “Unacceptable.” Portfolio does not demonstrate proficiency in argumentation, basic writing, and research. Or, portfolio does not follow directions in the “Specification” section above.
Sample Question: Should smoking be restricted in public places?

Compose an essay in which you argue whether members of a community (such as the University community) should or should not be allowed to smoke in public places (such as on campus). The readings below are here to help you answer the question. First, form your own opinion and decide how you will organize your essay. Then, whenever you think it useful, work in references to at least two of the readings to support your opinion and/or to contrast their statements with your own ideas. The references may be direct quotations, paraphrases, or citations of data or statistics. You must use material from at least two of the readings in your essay, and you must cite your sources using MLA format within your essay to show which readings provided your information. Be sure that you do not simply string together references to the readings. Your essay must be your own composition presenting your own ideas and not merely a patchwork of others’ work and ideas. Your essay will be evaluated on your argument and, in part, on how effectively the readings are used.

1. Smokers sometimes believe they contribute to the economy by supporting the huge tobacco industry. For instance, in 1969 the tobacco industry involved approximately 600,000 farm families that were located mostly in 10 states, six major cigarette companies employing almost 36,000 people in three states, and an advertising marketing component of millions. In 1974, the total crop was worth over 2 billion dollars and the public spent more than 14 billion dollars for tobacco products. The industry and those working for it paid large amounts of income taxes and stimulated other income-taxed areas of the economy. In short, cigarette smokers support the public with $6 billion a year. How much does the public give to the smokers?


2. If the government takes a more active role in discouraging people from smoking, it might influence the attitudes of smokers. However, our information suggests such action by the government would only reach those not currently smoking, such as those who have never smoked, those who have quit, and crusaders against smoking.

Rosenblatt, Daniel, Bernard Rosen, and Harvey Allen. Attitudes, Information, and Behavior of College Students Related to Smoking and Smoking Cessation.

3. No one should have to breathe the smoke of other people. If you smoke around others, they have to breathe your smoke. Studies show that in the United States, 5,000 people die each year because they have breathed someone else’s smoke. Therefore, schools, hospitals, sports arenas, convention centers, theaters, banks, and other places where people gather should be off limits to smoking. People should be able to eat in restaurants and have work places that are free from smoke. The Surgeon General of the United States has stated that smoking has taken a heavy toll on the health of the nation. Since smoking is a kind of suicide, then steps should be taken to prevent smokers from committing a kind of secondhand murder as well.


4. If laws are established to prevent smoking in public places, this would give the nonsmoker control over the smoker. It is not possible to enforce such laws without adding to the already strained work load of police and health departments. Also, I cannot see any real proof that secondary smoke poses a threat. Scientists, on three separate occasions, failed to show any real health problem for nonsmokers. All of those who use scare tactics to prevent smoking in public are using fake reasoning. They just do not want people to smoke in public.

Also, keeping smokers separate is expensive. A labor union study estimated that enforcing anti-smoking regulations would cost $265 million a year just for the city of New York. Antismoking laws would be expensive for employers as well. “I have my own office at Federal Metal Maintenance, Inc. If I did not, I would have to leave the work space and go to a smoking area every time I wanted to smoke. That would be a waste of time and money,” says Federal Metal Maintenance president.


5. Still smokers are beginning to feel that they are a persecuted minority who do, in fact, have some rights. Says one Boston woman, “… this crusade about health spills over into ‘I know what’s best for you.’ So what happens next? Do these experts in the name of better health make people eat fish instead of red meat?” Others object to the regulation of smoking on the grounds of practicality. Dividing smokers from nonsmokers at work would be a nightmare for employers, according to the Illinois Chamber of Commerce human resources manager, Leonard Day. On such grounds of practicality, the Illinois Chamber of Commerce has so far successfully lobbied against a no-smoking bill.