



Center for Writing and Speaking

T | NO. 14 IN THE CENTER FOR WRITING AND SPEAKING HANDOUT SERIES

Getting Tutored Online: Synchronous (Schedule 1)

The CWS offers two types of online tutoring: synchronous tutoring, where the tutee and tutor designate time to meet together virtually to discuss their paper; and asynchronous tutoring, where the tutee submits an assignment and the tutor gives feedback on their own time. Here is the process for synchronous tutoring, as well as tips for troubleshooting.

How to Get Tutored Synchronously

- 1. Make an appointment.** Like being tutored in-person, the first step to being tutored online is to make an appointment at cws.agnesscott.edu. If you've never had an appointment with the CWS before, you will also need to make an account by clicking "register for an account" on the website's landing page. Remember the schedule is always in Eastern Time no matter your time zone, so you may need to account for the time change at your location. You can make an appointment for either 30 minutes or 1 hour. Consider carefully how much time you will need to work on your assignment. If it is longer than 4 pages double-spaced, please make an hour-long appointment. You can attach documents to the appointment directly or email them to your tutor.
- 2. "Arrive" at your appointment.** About 5-10 minutes before your scheduled appointment, log into cws.agnesscott.edu again and find your appointment on the schedule; appointments where you are the client/tutee will be orange. When you click on your appointment, a new window should open. Click "start or join online appointment." This will take you to the "location" of your virtual appointment. Your tutor will either already be on this page or will log in before the start time of your appointment--if they have an appointment immediately before yours, they may not be early because they need to wrap up with the person before you.
- 3. Begin your appointment.** When you and your tutor both log on, you will both need to make sure the online software is working for both of you. The default option for tutoring is the WC Online software, built into the cws.agnesscott.edu website. If you'd like, you can use any other platform for communication as long as you and your tutor agree to it. If you are having problems using the software, look at the "Troubleshooting" area of this handout. Have your email open if possible--this is the most effective way to communicate when something isn't working over audio/visual chat.
- 4. Get tutored.** Your tutor will give you guidance on how the session will go depending on your needs, and you are always welcome to make specific requests as to how you'd like to spend the time.
- 5. Wrap up.** When the appointment is done, simply close the tutoring software you've decided to use. Consider leaving us a review so we know how we can help you better, especially in the online format.

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Troubleshooting Online Tutoring

My tutor can't hear me, or I can't hear my tutor at all.

- Is anyone's computer connected to a Bluetooth device or headphones that they wouldn't hear?
- Are both people's microphones on?
- Did you both give permission to the website to be able to use the mic?
- Is your volume up?
- Try using headphones with a microphone on them--this helps with audio quality in general.
- Try hanging up and calling again. If this doesn't work, try calling again on a different platform.

My tutor can't see me, or I can't see my tutor at all.

- Did you both give permission to the website to be able to use the camera?
- Are both people's cameras on?
- Do one of you have something physically blocking the camera, like a sticker or slider?
- Try hanging up and calling again. If this doesn't work, try calling again on a different platform.

The connection is slow--the video and/or audio is breaking up, or the call keeps dropping.

- Are you both connected to the right WiFi network? Can one of you move closer to the router?
- Turning video off can often make audio clearer, since audio input is more important for a session.
- Try hanging up and calling again. If this doesn't work, try calling again on a different platform.
- As a last resort, and only if you are willing--use data to communicate with your tutor if you have unlimited data on a phone or tablet.

I missed my session, or my tutor didn't show up.

- The first step to when a tutor and tutee miss each other is to email--we take our job seriously and commit to be on-time for you. If we've realized we've missed a session, we will always immediately reach out. We also understand how easy it is to miss an appointment, especially in the online format, and we welcome you to re-book with anyone in the CWS if you accidentally miss yours.
- Are you in different time zones, and if so, could one of you have miscalculated the time change?
- Could one or both of you have a malfunctioning internet connection, preventing you from communicating about the appointment?

Tips for a Successful Session

- **Minimize distractions.** We completely understand that you may be in a living situation with distractions outside of your control--many tutors working remotely are in the same shoes. However, when you book synchronously, please minimize those distractions that are in your control. Just like in an in-person session, it would be rude if you were on your phone the whole time or worked on something else during the session. If you don't want to actively interact with a tutor, you can make an asynchronous appointment.
- **Experiment with different software.** The CWS website software is not your only option if you dislike it. As long as it works for your tutor, feel free to try out other options, like Skype, Zoom, or Google Hangouts. Many tutors have found Google Hangouts combined with Google Docs to work well, especially.

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