
THE SUPPORT SERVICES LISTICLE

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Abstract

The author describes a “listicle” writing activity in which students write about campus support services in a “five things you should know” format in order to share with their classmates. This fosters a sense of audience as well as a connection to the campus.

Keywords: listicle, community building, introduction to research

The listicle, a portmanteau of *list* and *article*, is a fun assignment for writing students to complete early in the school year. For one of the first assignments, I ask students to research someplace on campus that supports students. The final result of their research is a listicle that they share with the rest of the class. I assign this to foster a sense of community while teaching academic communication skills to freshman students at the community college.

On the day I give the assignment, I have students select a place on campus where the goal is to support student learning (e.g., the career center, the student basic needs center, or the math resource center). Then students search the college website, find important facts about the support provided, and identify the contact information for someone who works there. They compose an email asking the contact person if they would be willing to answer some questions. Then the students visit their location and take pictures of it.

After the research about the location, students distill what they learned into a five-item listicle. While creating the listicle, they practice incorporating quotations from their interview and the college website. They document their sources in MLA. They also have to select which information would be most interesting and useable by their audience—their classmates.

When they turn in their paper, students share what they learned with their classmates. This gives the whole class new inside information about 20 places on campus. For example, we once learned that Veteran’s Services sometimes offers free haircuts. One student noted that the campus police will help jumpstart stalled cars. Another time we learned that the math center rents calculators.

This assignment encourages students to connect with people on campus whose job is to support their learning. It also promotes skills like sending a professional email and sharing information in a way that is timely and engaging to an audience beyond just their teacher.

Author Biography

Beth Gulley is a Professor of English at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas. She holds a PhD from the University of Kansas. Her recent academic publications include “MLA 8: We Are Here, But Should We Have Come?” in *Literacy and NCTE*, and as a coauthor for “A Means Of Living, Seeing, And Teaching Through Haiku” in *Kansas English*. She is also the author

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