



ENGL 1023

Essay Assignment 4: Disciplinary Analysis

In this essay, you will choose a discourse community—possibly your major or a hobby—and determine how members of that discourse community use spoken and written language (**discourse**) to meet their goals.

Introduction:

Your introduction should briefly (one or two sentences) define “discourse community” and also identify the discourse community you are analyzing. Explain that you intend to prove that X is a discourse community based on the six criteria that John Swales proposes (see page 215 in *Writing About Writing*). You may use these six criteria as your essay map (your method of organizing the body).

Body:

The body of your essay should first describe your methodology—that is, what you did to gather your data about your discourse community. Identify any polls, surveys, interviews, or other kinds of research you used.

Next, explain in detail how your discourse community meets each of John Swales’ six criteria, which are:

1. A broadly agreed upon set of goals
2. Means of communication among members (e.g., email, phone, meetings)
3. Methods of providing feedback to other members
4. Shared genres (types of writing—brochures, reports, flyers, newsletters, etc.)
5. Shared lexis (terms that members know and use—bogey, birdie, bunker, etc. for golfers)
6. Diverse range of expertise, from novices to experts

For each criterion, use several examples from your research (or, if applicable, your own experiences) to illustrate how your discourse community meets that criterion.

Finally, use the last part of the body to identify any other interesting features of your discourse community that do not meet any of the six criteria. These might include:

- Sources of conflict or tension within the discourse community
- Internal/external challenges to the discourse community
- How someone could join the discourse community
- How the discourse community has changed over time

Conclusion:

Your conclusion should address the “so what” question—why does your essay matter?

Example: *When fans see their favorite bands play, what they do not see is the hard work that goes into making a band work. Understanding how bands exemplify discourse communities may give audiences a greater appreciation for music as a profession—not just a hobby.*