Students who learn how to write well will earn better grades in most classes. This is true because most instructors assign a variety of written assignments, and depending on the class, these written assignments often encompass a large percentage of a student’s final grade. For instance, all college students seeking a degree will be required to take a composition class.  In this class alone, students will write five different essays. Furthermore, other classes, such as history, psychology, nursing, etc., also require students to write multiple essays. According to John Doe, a Professor of English at Aims Community College, the average undergraduate student will write twenty-five different essays while seeking a bachelor’s degree. This number increases dramatically for students who go on to seek a graduate degree(s).  Because all students, regardless of major, will be required to compose a large number of essays, it is important that they learn how to write well.

My first day of college was a disaster. First, I went to the wrong classroom for math. I was sitting in the class, surrounded by people taking notes and paying attention to how to do equations, which would have been okay if I was supposed to be in an algebra class. In reality, I was supposed to be in geometry, and when I discovered my error, I had already missed the first twenty minutes of a one-hour class. When I got to the correct class, all twenty-five students turned and looked at me as the teacher said, “You’re late.” That would have been bad enough, but in my next class my history teacher spoke so fast I could not follow most of what he said. The only thing I did hear was that we were having a quiz tomorrow over today’s lecture. My day seemed to be going better during botany class, that is, until we visited the lab. I had a sneezing fit because of one of the plants in the lab and had to leave the room. When I finally finished my classes for the day, I discovered I had locked my keys in the car and had to wait for my brother to bring another set. My first day of school was so bad that I know the rest will have to be better.

Slave spirituals often had hidden double meanings. On one level, spirituals referenced heaven, Jesus, and the soul, but on another level, the songs spoke about slave resistance. For example, according to Frederick Douglass, the song “O Canaan, Sweet Canaan” spoke of slaves’ longing for heaven, but it also expressed their desire to escape to the North. Careful listeners heard this second meaning in the following lyrics: “I don’t expect to stay / Much longer here. / Run to Jesus, shun the danger. / I don’t expect to stay.” When slaves sang this song, they could have been speaking of their departure from this life and their arrival in heaven; however, they also could have been describing their plans to leave the South and run, not to Jesus, but to the North. Slaves even used songs like “Steal Away to Jesus (at midnight)” to announce to other slaves the time and place of secret, forbidden meetings. What whites heard as merely spiritual songs, slaves discerned as detailed messages. The hidden meanings in spirituals allowed slaves to sing what they could not say.