

The Online Appointment: How to Use the System and Why We Think It's Cool

Hey, did you just sign up for an online appointment? Congrats! Are you nervous about it, or are you just not really sure how it works? That's okay! As everything else new, it can be somewhat intimidating, but we made a handout for you that tells you how the system works. Check it out 😊

Step 1: Log in to your Writing Center account, and go to your scheduled appointment. Click on your reserved spot, and when the appointment form you filled out pops open, hit "Start or Join Online Consultation".

The image displays two overlapping browser windows from the Mississippi State University Writing Center. The left window shows a calendar interface for the week of January 12-18, 2017. A yellow arrow points to a reserved appointment slot on Wednesday, January 18, from 6:00pm to 7:00pm, which is assigned to 'ying qin'. The right window shows the appointment form for 'Devan'. A yellow arrow points to the 'Start or Join Online Consultation' button. The form includes fields for 'Time' (Wednesday, January 18, 7:00pm to 8:00pm), 'Client' (ying qin, yq39@msstate.edu), 'Meet Online?' (Yes - Schedule Online Appointment), 'Course' (design class), 'Instructor' (Taze), 'What college is your major in?' (Agriculture), 'What is your standing?' (MA Student), 'Is this your first visit to this MSU WC?' (No), and 'Is this a required appointment?' (No).

Step 2: Get yourself familiar with the space. See what all buttons and little boxes do.

The screenshot shows a web browser window titled "WCONLINE Online Consultation - Google Chrome". The address bar shows the URL: <https://wcoom.com:9091/p/msstate.sc1587ead7fe636b?userName=Sava&key=MDI8c2MxNTg3ZWFKN2ZlNjM2YiEwMTE5>. The browser toolbar includes standard editing tools like Bold, Italic, Underline, and text color. The main content area displays a document with a yellow border, containing text about the Memphis Botanic Garden (MBG). A large white rectangular area is highlighted with a yellow border and labeled "White board space". On the right side, there is a chat window titled "CHAT" with a "Send Real Time Chat Updates" checkbox. The chat window shows a list of messages from users named Devan and ying, with timestamps. The chat window also has a text input field and a "CHAT" button.

See that big box that I outlined in yellow and says "white board space"? This is, well, your white board (*sigh*; corny, huh?). It works just like a Word document – you can type text, you can copy and paste from other files, you can delete, move around. What's even better is that both you and your tutor can work in that space at the same time,

Now, see that chat box on the right? Pretty close to any Facebook Messenger app, GroupMe, iMessage, Something-another chat that you're already familiar with. This is where you and your tutor will exchange messages and do most of your communicating.

Step 3: We like big buttons, and we cannot lie. Let's see what all they do:

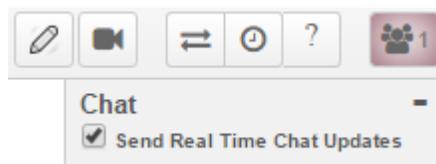


First, the familiar looking ones on the top left corner are so much like MS Word's functions, aren't they? From left to right, B is for bolding your text, I is for italicizing, U is for underlining, S is for strikethrough; if you can't remember these, just hover over the buttons with your mouse, and you'll see what they do.

Then, the four buttons in the middle let you number items in a list and indent your text.

Oops! Did you mess up something? Don't worry – you can undo or redo (the two swirling arrows) so that you don't lose any info.

Last but not least, the button with the crossed out eye and the one with π . The first one lets you get rid of all color coding on the white board, while the latter one lets you incorporate different symbols in your text (cool!).



There are a few more buttons in the top right corner of your screen that you should probably know about, too. The pencil on the left is for all writers who also fancy their drawing skills and would want to circle stuff on the white board, draw arrows, or just scribble something. The second button (the little camera) is for video conferencing; if you and your tutor are both okay with video conferencing and would prefer this for the sake of communicating more easily, you can give it a try.

Next are the arrows pointing in opposite directions; you can use this button to import/export files into your session. You will probably need to use this one because our online system doesn't keep the original formatting from your file if you just copy and paste. If you import your paper, then your tutor can see it the way you had it formatted with all indentations, spacing, footnotes, etc. That little clock button up there? This is our Timeslider, which keeps track of all work in progress. If you want to go back to a session and see what you worked on and follow it in chronological order, this is the tool for you.

Need help? The question mark button would probably do a much better job of explaining how things work than me.

Just two buttons left: the check mark for sending real time chat updates and the one with the little people figures. The first one, if checked, lets your tutor see your message as you're typing it, even before you hit the ENTER key to send. This just speeds up the conversation and makes for fewer awkward "silent" moments. The little people figures button, on the other hand, shows you how many people have joined the conversation; is it just you in the chat room, or is your tutor already online? From this button, you can also change your screen name and the color your text will appear with. You and your tutor will want to choose contrasting colors, so it makes it clearer as to who is doing what.

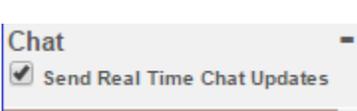
Step 4: Be a cool writer! Of course you're cool anyway, but don't let tech make you feel uncomfortable.

I know that sitting in front of a computer and chatting with somebody may feel impersonal and awkward, but our online system is not that bad once you get used to it. Don't worry about typos – it happens to everyone (even tutors). Do you need some help figuring out the space? Ask your tutor – s/he will be more than happy to give you a hand.

We really hope this handout helps you navigate our system for the first time. We've outlined the basics for you, but you're more than welcome to ask any of our staff for help or to just play around with our platform.

Good luck, and happy writing!

Legend of All Buttons

	Bold
	Italicize
	Underline
	Strikethrough
	Ordered list
	Unordered list
	Indent
	Outdent
	Undo
	Redo
	Remove color coding
	Insert special symbols
	Drawing tool
	Video conferencing
	Import/export files into session
	Timeslider: keeps record of all changes
	Help
	Number of people online and choosing your color of text
	Real time chat updates: checked for letting the other person see what you're typing as you're doing it; unchecked to send message only after hitting the ENTER key