

## LOL Essay

Your final task for LING2050 is to write an essay in which you explore the question: *Does LOL still mean “Laughing out Loud”?* Specifically, you will answer the questions:

- a) What has LOL meant in the past?
- b) How has the meaning of LOL changed?
- c) What do you mean when you use LOL?
- d) How do your classmates tend to use LOL? Does their data support or weaken McWhorter’s theory?
- e) What do you think LOL will mean in the future?

To answer part a), research the etymology of LOL using the resources and etymology tools that have been presented to you throughout this semester. (The full etymology of LOL would include the past meanings as well as how and when the word came into the English language.)

To answer part b), talk about the current uses of LOL. Specifically mention John McWhorter’s research covered in Week 14. You may also want to consult the urban dictionary or solicit anecdotal information from a teenager you may know.

To answer part c), look through your own text messages and identify 2-3 conversations where LOL was used. Provide screen captures of these text conversations or type them out in the body of your essay. Then, explain your usage of LOL. Were you using it in the “old” sense (i.e. to denote that you were literally laughing) or were you using it in the “new” sense (i.e. as a pragmatic particle)? If you were using it in a “new” sense, what function was it serving (ending the conversation, changing the subject, softening, etc.)? Justify your answer.

To answer part d), look through the discussion board from Week 14b. How does your usage of LOL compare/contrast with your classmates’ usage? Give specific examples. Overall, does your classmates’ data support or weaken McWhorter’s theory? Explain.

To answer part e), consider our conversations throughout the semester on language change. Based on what you’ve learned this semester about slang, language change, and the history of English, what do you think is the most likely path for LOL? Will it still be used 20 years from now? By whom? What will it mean at that time? Justify your position.

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### Technical specs:

- Minimum 3 full double-spaced pages, plus bibliography

- When presenting data in Parts B and C, makes sure you number the conversations and refer to them as Example 1, Example 2, etc. (See Module #14b)
- Any citation style fine, but be certain to cite any sources you use (see Modules #15a/b).
- Include a bibliography at the end of the paper
- Consult rubric prior to turning in the paper to ensure that you addressed all portions of the assignment

	<b>Did not Meet Standards</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Satisfactory</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
Critical Thinking (Explain)	Incoherent segments about the history of LOL are presented. Past meanings or chronology are not outlined.	Partial history of LOL. Past meanings or chronology are briefly mentioned.	Information about the some of etymology of LOL. Past meanings and chronology are generally discussed.	Information about the full etymology of LOL. This includes the past meanings as well as how and when the word came into the English language.
Critical Thinking (Evaluate)	Does not identify the main trends of LOL usage from classmates' Discussion Board entries and/or does not discuss class data or McWhorter's theory.	Vaguely identifies some LOL trends from classmates' Discussion Board entries and does not fully discuss data in relation to McWhorter's theory.	Identifies the main trends of LOL usage from classmates' Discussion Board entries and discusses class data in light of the McWhorter theory.	Clearly identifies trends of LOL usage from classmates' Discussion Board entries and justifies whether the class data confirm or weaken the McWhorter theory.
Critical Thinking (Analyze)	Does not identify text conversations where LOL was used and does not demonstrate "new" and "old" meanings of LOL.	Identifies 1 text conversation where LOL was used and demonstrates a general sense of the "new" and "old" meanings of LOL.	Identifies 1-2 text conversations where LOL was used with accompanying explanation/rationale and demonstrates a general comprehension of the "new" and "old" meanings of LOL.	Identifies 2-3 text conversations where LOL was used with accompanying explanation/rationale and demonstrates complete understanding of both the "new" and "old" meanings of LOL.
Written Communication (Context & Purpose)	Does not address the topic and only answers some of the assignment questions; analysis is not appropriate for the purpose of the assignment.	Addresses the topic and answers most of the assignment questions; analysis is appropriate for the purpose of the assignment.	Addresses the topic and answer all of the main question LOL questions; analysis is appropriate for the purview of this essay assignment.	Addresses the topic fully and explores issues thoughtfully; conveys a sense of "completeness" without any lingering questions; analysis is not overly simplistic or simply reinforcing known stereotypes.

Written Communication (Content Development)	Does not provide evidence of the data gathered from actual text messages; presentation of data is not coherent or organized.	Provide some of the evidence of data gathered from actual text messages; presentation of data is not entirely coherent.	Provide most of the evidence of data gathered from actual text messages and present the data in an organized fashion.	Provide evidence of data gathered from actual text messages and present the data in a clear manner, with conversations numbered and referenced by their number.
Written Communication (Source & Evidence)	Paper does not contain a bibliography of articles/videos that were utilized in the essay nor in-text citations in the body of the paper.	Paper is either missing a bibliography of articles/videos that were utilized in the essay or in-text citations.	Paper contains a bibliography of articles/videos that were utilized in the essay; Article reference/in-text citation is used throughout the body of the paper.	Paper contains an alphabetized bibliography of articles/videos that were utilized in the essay; Proper article reference/in-text citation is used throughout the body of the paper, with all direct quotations and summarized material being properly attributed to the original source.
Written Communication (Control of Syntax and Mechanics)	Students does not employ acceptable control of diction, sentence variety, and transition; of mechanics, spelling, grammar, and punctuation; all of proper form and appearance.	Students employ a noice control of diction, sentence variety, and transition; of mechanics, spelling, grammar, and punctuation; all of proper form and appearance.	Students employ acceptable control of diction, sentence variety, and transition; of mechanics, spelling, grammar, and punctuation; all of proper form and appearance.	Students employ superior control of diction, sentence variety, and transition; of mechanics, spelling, grammar, and punctuation; all of proper form and appearance.