



# National Survey of Student Engagement 2013 to 2018 Trends in Writing

## HMC Response Rates:

	First-Year		Senior	
	N	%	N	%
2013	110	56%	121	64%
2014	123	57%	132	69%
2015	90	47%	107	58%
2016	108	51%	108	59%
2017	112	52%	94	50%
2018	84	38%	88	48%

## Background:

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) asks first-year and senior students about the characteristics and quality of their undergraduate experience. It includes 10 Engagement Indicators (Higher-Order Learning, Reflective and Integrative Learning, Learning Strategies, Quantitative Reasoning, Collaborative Learning, Discussions with Diverse Others, Student-Faculty Interaction, Effective Teaching Practices, Quality of Interactions, and Supportive Environment) and High Impact Practices (Learning Communities, Service-Learning, Research with Faculty, Internships, Study Abroad, and Capstones). Additionally, NSSE allows campuses to add up to two additional topical modules to their survey. In 2013, NSSE started offering a topical module on Experiences with Writing. HMC participated in this every year through 2018. Questions pertaining to writing are contained in both the Writing Module and the main survey (see Appendix 1 for a list of all writing questions by source). Comparison groups vary over time and between the main survey and the module. These are noted in Appendix 2. The NSSE survey is administered to all HMC first-year students and graduating seniors each spring. NSSE results are used throughout the campus in departmental program reviews to evaluate growth and development on student learning outcomes and by the College overall in its improvement efforts.

## Highlights:

- HMC first-year students are more likely than students from the comparison group to report seeking and receiving feedback from each other and talking with others to develop their ideas before starting an assignment. This is not true of HMC seniors who report doing these things less than HMC first-years and slightly less than their senior peers (see graphs 1, 2, & 3).
- HMC first-years are also more likely to report having analyzed or evaluated something they have read, researched, or observed and having described their methods or findings related to data they have collected than their peers. Seniors report doing these things about as much as their

peers (see graphs 5 & 6).

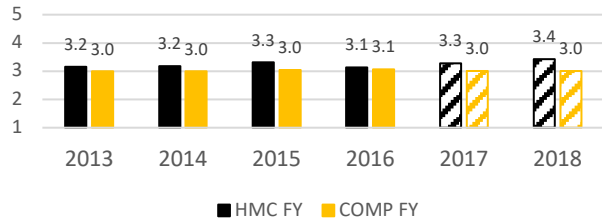
- HMC first-years and seniors are both more likely than their peers to have reported arguing a position using evidence and reasoning and to have explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data though the difference is greater for first-years than for seniors (see graphs 7 & 8).
- Both first-years and seniors at HMC are more likely to report having written in the style and format of a specific academic discipline and to have addressed a real or imagined audience than have their peers. Again, the differences are greater for first-years than for seniors (see graphs 9 & 10).
- HMC first-years are slightly more likely than their peers to report having prepared two or more drafts of a paper before turning it in. Seniors are less likely to have done so (see graph 11).
- First-years and seniors at the comparison schools report that their experience has contributed to the development of their writing clearly and effectively more than do first-years and seniors at HMC (see graph 12).
- While both HMC first-years and seniors report that faculty provided clear instructions describing what they wanted them to do at the same rate as their peers, HMC students from both classes report that faculty explain what they want them to learn and the specific grading criteria that will be used less often than do students from comparison schools (see graphs 14, 15, & 16).
- HMC students report having written fewer pages than their peers at comparison institutions (see graphs 17, 18, 19, & 20).
- Looking only at HMC, first-years report doing more of the iterative aspects of writing than do seniors. Iteration includes things like talking with a classmate, friend or family member to develop ideas before starting an assignment or preparing two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in. HMC first-years also report doing more of the meaning-making aspects of writing than do HMC seniors. Meaning-making includes things like analyzing or evaluating something read, researched, or observed or explaining in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data. While HMC first-years report engaging in more iteration and meaning-making, HMC seniors report writing more finished pages.

Detailed results are presented graphically in the pages that follow. First-year results by item are in the left-hand column while those for seniors are in the right-hand column. Striped columns indicate that the difference is statistically significant ( $p \leq 0.05$ ).

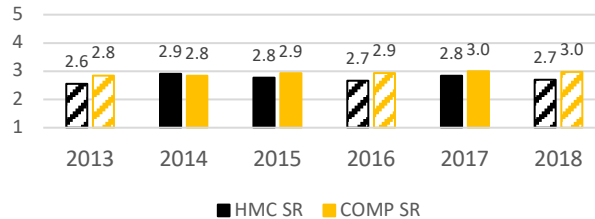
## During the current school year, for how many writing assignments have you done the following?

1 = No writing assignments, 2 = Few, 3 = Some, 4 = Most, 5 = All writing assignments

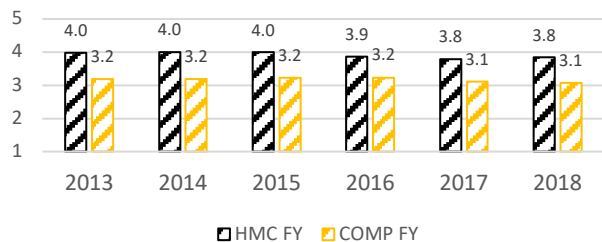
1. Talked with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop your ideas before starting your assignment



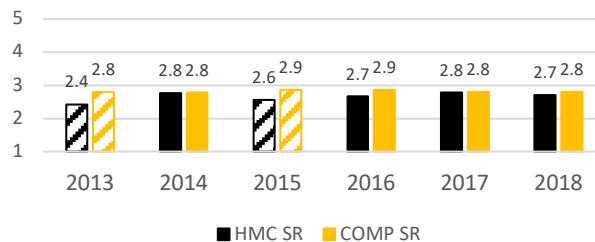
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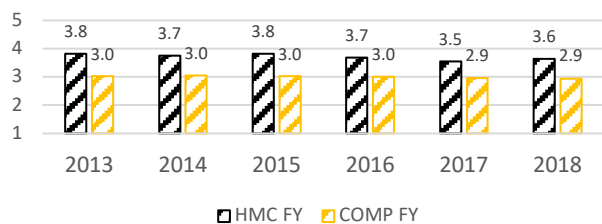
2. Received feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in your final assignment



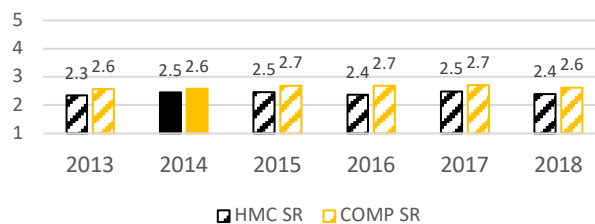
2. Received feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in your final assignment



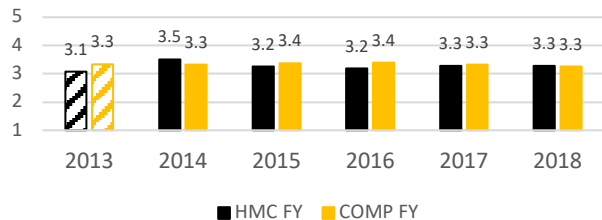
3. Gave feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline he or she had written



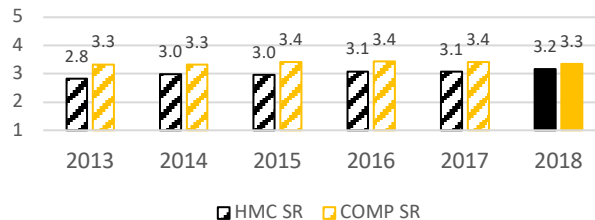
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4. Summarized material you read, such as articles, books, or online publications



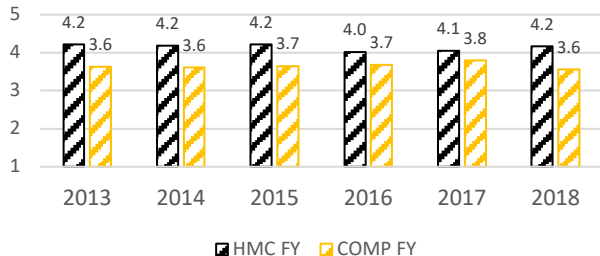
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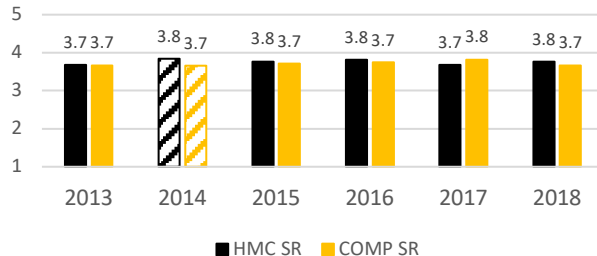
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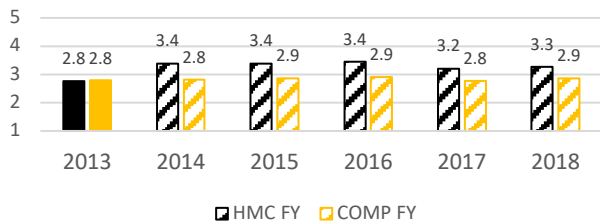
### 5. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed



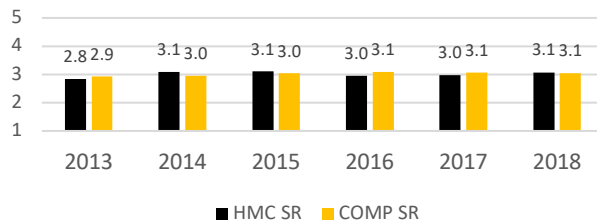
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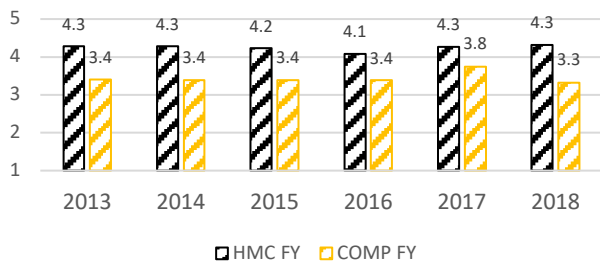
### 6. Described your methods or findings related to data you collected in lab or field work, a survey project, etc.



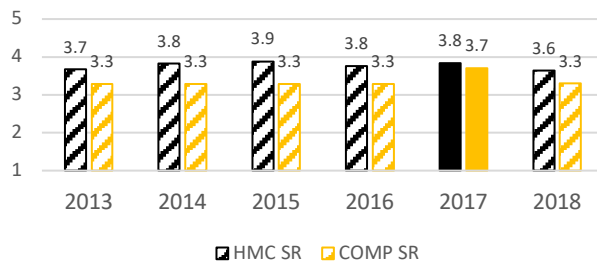
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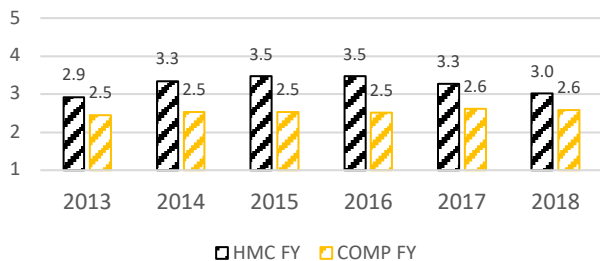
### 7. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning



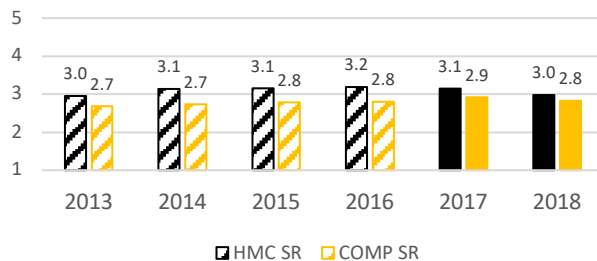
### 7. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning



### 8. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data



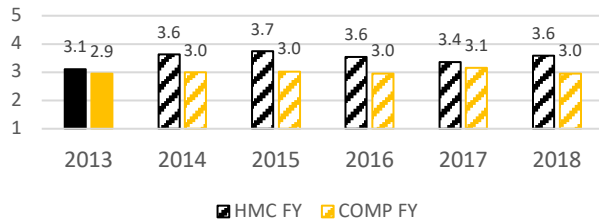
### 8. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data



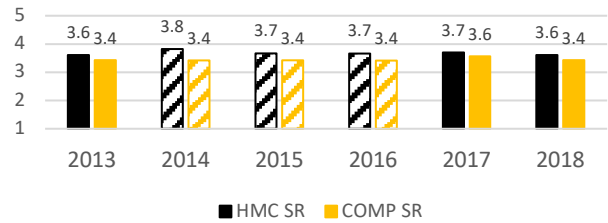
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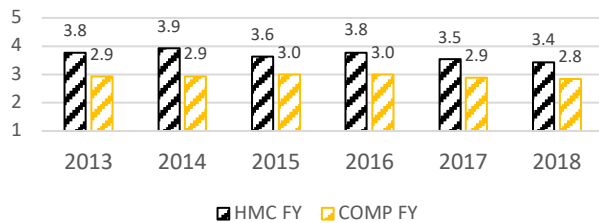
9. Wrote in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)



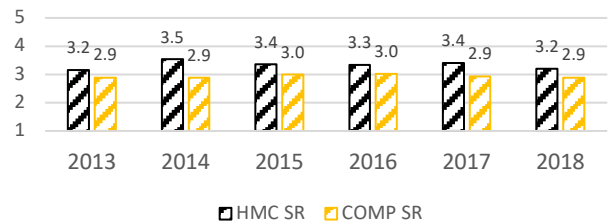
9. Wrote in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)



10. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.



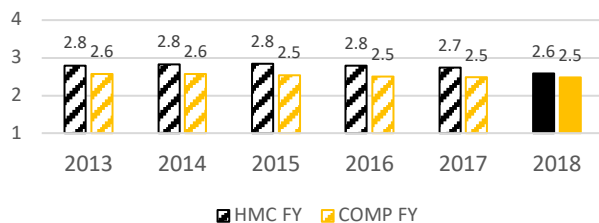
10. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.



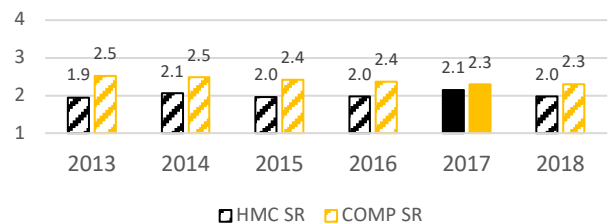
**During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?**

1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very Often

11. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in



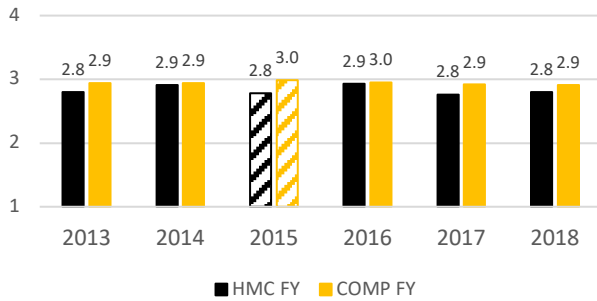
11. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in



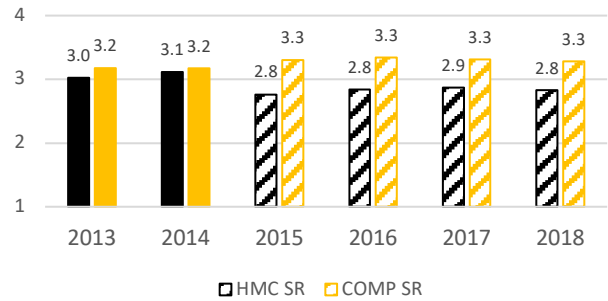
**How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?**

1 = Very little, 2 = Some, 3 = Quite a bit, 4 = Very Much

**12. Writing clearly and effectively**



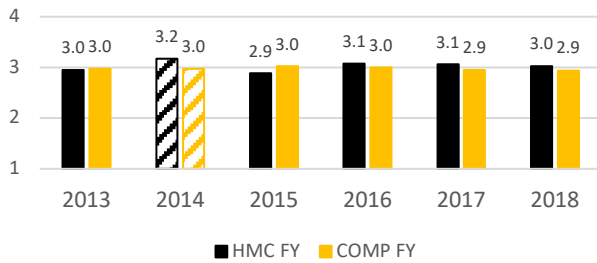
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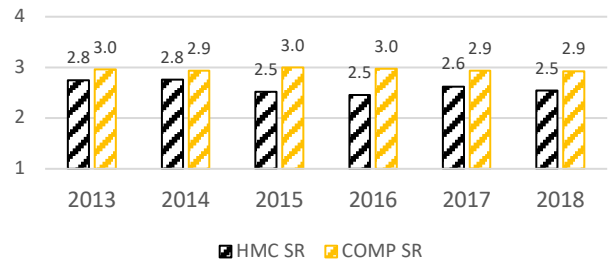
**During the current school year, to what extent have your instructors done the following?**

1 = Very little, 2 = Some, 3 = Quite a bit, 4 = Very Much

**13. Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress**



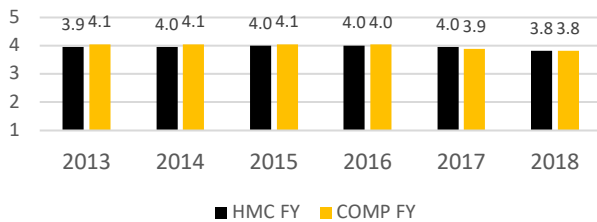
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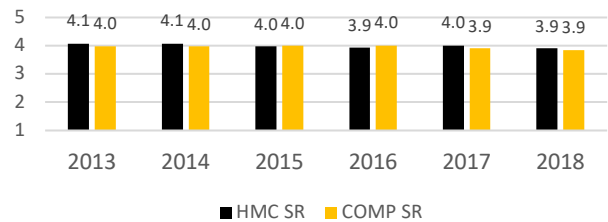
**During the current school year, for how many of your writing assignments have your instructors done the following?**

1 = No writing assignments, 2 = Few, 3 = Some, 4 = Most, 5 = All writing assignments

**14. Provided clear instructions describing what he or she wanted you to do**



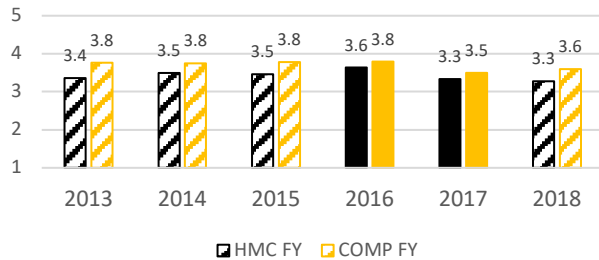
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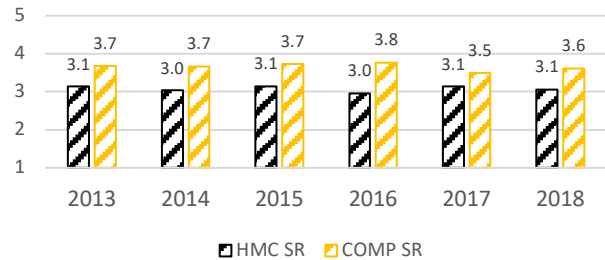
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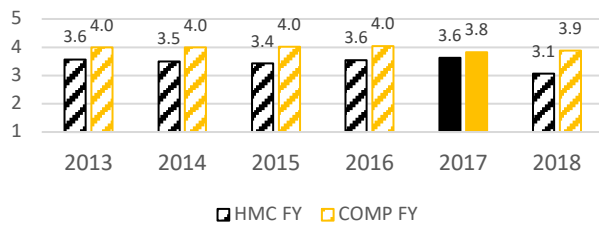
**15. Explained in advance what he or she wanted you to learn**



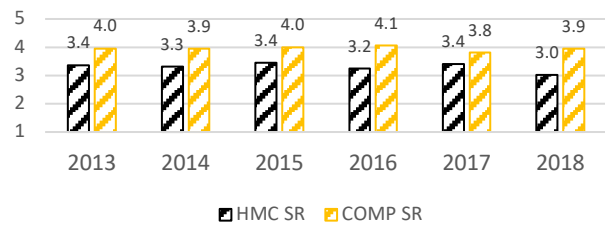
**15. Explained in advance what he or she wanted you to learn**



**16. Explained in advance the criteria he or she would use to grade your assignment**

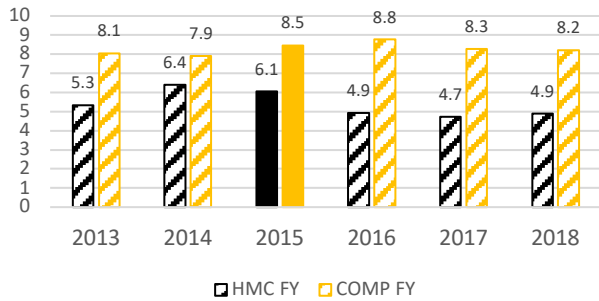


**16. Explained in advance the criteria he or she would use to grade your assignment**

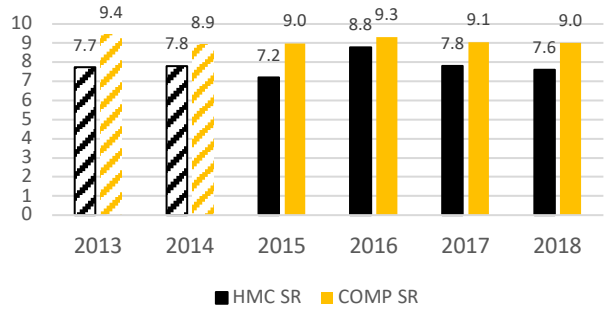


During the current school year, about how many papers, reports, or other writing tasks of the following lengths have you been assigned? (Include those not yet completed.)

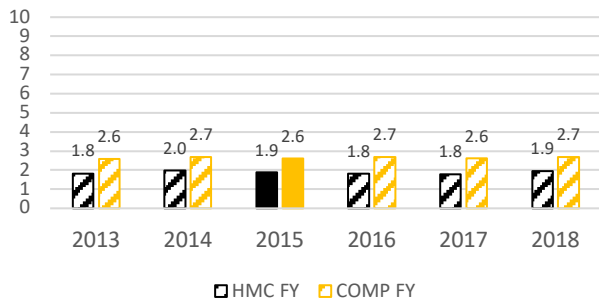
17. Up to 5 pages



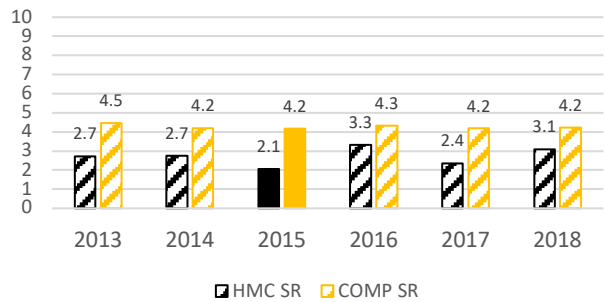
17. Up to 5 pages



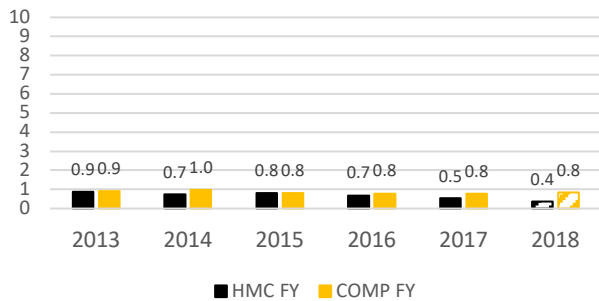
18. Between 6 and 10 pages



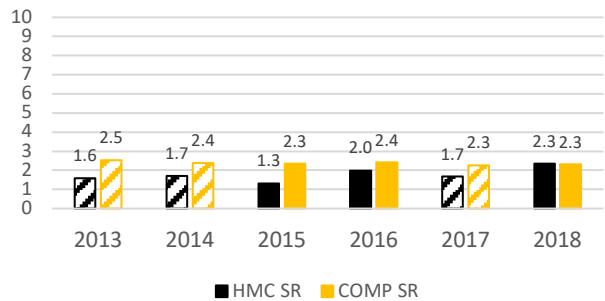
18. Between 6 and 10 pages



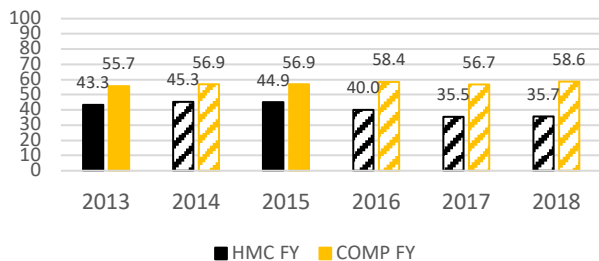
19. 11 pages or more



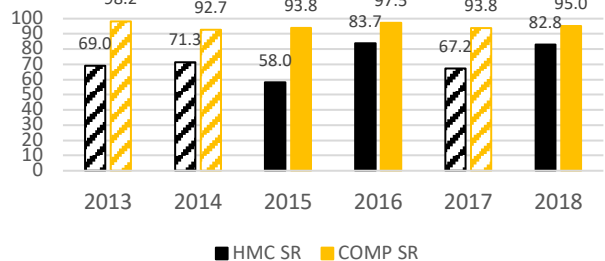
19. 11 pages or more



20. NSSE estimated number of assigned pages of student writing



20. NSSE estimated number of assigned pages of student writing





## Appendix 1

### Writing-related questions by source

#### Questions from the Main Survey:

**1. During the current school year, about how often have you done the following?**

*1 = Never, 2 = Sometimes, 3 = Often, 4 = Very Often*

- b. Prepared two or more drafts of a paper or assignment before turning it in

**5. During the current school year, to what extent have your instructors done the following?**

*1 = Very little, 2 = Some, 3 = Quite a bit, 4 = Very Much*

- d. Provided feedback on a draft or work in progress

**7. During the current school year, about how many papers, reports, or other writing tasks of the following lengths have you been assigned? (Include those not yet completed.)**

- a. Up to 5 pages
- b. Between 6 and 10 pages
- c. 11 pages or more

Estimated number of assigned pages of student writing (Calculated by NSSE)

**17. How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following areas?**

*1 = Very little, 2 = Some, 3 = Quite a bit, 4 = Very Much*

- a. Writing clearly and effectively

#### Questions from the Writing Module:

**1. During the current school year, for how many *writing assignments* have you done the following?**

*1 = No writing assignments, 2 = Few, 3 = Some, 4 = Most, 5 = All writing assignments*

- a. Talked with a classmate, friend, or family member to develop your ideas before starting your assignment
- b. Received feedback from a classmate, friend, or family member about a draft before turning in your final assignment
- c. Gave feedback to a classmate about a draft or outline he or she had written
- d. Summarized material you read, such as articles, books, or online publications
- e. Analyzed or evaluated something you read, researched, or observed
- f. Described your methods or findings related to data you collected in lab or field work, a survey project, etc.
- g. Argued a position using evidence and reasoning
- h. Explained in writing the meaning of numerical or statistical data
- i. Wrote in the style and format of a specific field (engineering, history, psychology, etc.)
- j. Addressed a real or imagined audience such as your classmates, a politician, non-experts, etc.

**2. During the current school year, for how many of your writing assignments have your instructors done the following?**

*1 = No writing assignments, 2 = Few, 3 = Some, 4 = Most, 5 = All writing assignments*

- a. Provided clear instructions describing what he or she wanted you to do
- b. Explained in advance what he or she wanted you to learn
- c. Explained in advance the criteria he or she would use to grade your assignment

## Appendix 2

### Comparison groups by survey segment and year

<b>Year</b>	<b>Main Survey</b>	<b>Writing Module</b>
2013	Far west private institutions	All other participating institutions
2014	Far west private institutions	All other participating institutions
2015	Carnegie Class	All other participating institutions
2016	More selective baccalaureate colleges of arts and sciences	All other participating institutions
2017	More selective baccalaureate colleges of arts and sciences	Nine other more selective baccalaureate colleges of arts and sciences
2018	More selective baccalaureate colleges of arts and sciences	All other participating institutions