



FALL 2008 VALUE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION METARUBRIC DRAFT FOR PUBLIC RELEASE

This rubric is the first step in a rubric development process that will produce additional drafts, each responsive to the feedback received. Feedback deadline is February 15, 2009. The next draft of this rubric will be available in May 2009. For more information or to give feedback, please email Wende Morgaine at wendemm@gmail.com. Thank you!

This writing rubric is designed for use in a wide variety of educational institutions. Perhaps the most clear finding to emerge from decades of research on writing assessment is that the best writing assessments are locally determined and sensitive to local context and mission. Users of this rubric should, in the end, consider making adaptations and additions that clearly link the language of the rubric to individual campus contexts.

This rubric focuses assessment on how specific written products, compiled in a portfolio or on their own, respond to specific contexts. The central question guiding the rubric is "How well does writing respond to the needs of audience(s) for the work?" In focusing on this question the rubric does not attend to other aspects of writing that are equally important: issues of writing process, writing strategies, writers' fluency with different modes of textual production or publication, or writer's growing engagement with writing and disciplinarity through the process of writing. Instead, this rubric encourages faculty to evaluate how well writing responds to audience expectations.

In order to use this rubric, assessors must have information about the assignments or purposes for writing guiding writers' work. We also recommend that portfolios include a reflective component that addresses such questions as: What decisions did the writer make about audience, purpose, and genre as s/he compiled the work in the portfolio? How are those choices evident in the writing -- in the content, organization and structure, reasoning, evidence, mechanical and surface conventions, and citational systems used in the writing? These reflective components will enable readers to have a clear sense of how writers understand the assignments that have shaped the portfolio's contents. Readers may take these into consideration as they assess the materials in the portfolio, as well.

This rubric includes four categories for assessing student work: Accomplished, Competent, Developing, and Beginning. Institutions might choose to associate these with a four-year course of educational development; alternatively, they may choose to benchmark these stages of writing at other points in a students' educational career. Writing is an iterative, recursive process where students return to and build upon familiar and new knowledge; these categories are intended to represent a developmental progression through writing.

Faculty interested in the research on writing assessment that has guided our work here can consult the National Council of Teachers of English/Council of Writing Program Administrators' White Paper on Writing Assessment (2008; <http://www.wpacouncil.org/whitepaper>) and the Conference on College Composition and Communication's Writing Assessment: A Position Statement (2008; <http://www.ncte.org/cccc/resources/positions/123784.htm>).

In addition, Evaluators are encouraged to assign a zero to any performance that doesn't meet level one performance.

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Context of and purpose for writing	Has a sophisticated and nuanced definition of purpose that is used to focus all elements. Work is responsive to the assigned task and demonstrates initiative in defining task and audience.	Has a clear definition of purpose that is used to control the organization and reasoning of the assignment(s). Analysis of purpose and audience expectations is evident throughout.	Has a clearly defined purpose and is tailored to the specifics of the assignment(s) and a simple analysis of audience expectations.	Has an implied purpose and demonstrates some attention to audience needs and assignment(s).
Content Development (<i>reasoning, organization, and detail</i>)	Presents and explores sophisticated and complex ideas developed through insightful reasoning and highly relevant supporting details. Organization enhances the development of those ideas and is clearly effective.	Presents and explores increasingly complex ideas through the use of deliberate reasoning and appropriate details. Organization enhances the development of those ideas.	Presents ideas of some complexity, using adequate reasoning, and offers details to explain and begin to expand ideas. Organization generally supports the development of ideas.	Presents simple ideas with basic reasoning and organization and includes modest use of details to explain or support ideas.
Genre and disciplinary conventions	Blends genre and disciplinary conventions in sophisticated ways to structure the writing and situate it within the discipline.	Consistently uses genre conventions and conventions of the discipline to situate ideas in the writing.	Shows evidence of attempts to use genre conventions as well as disciplinary conventions to structure the writing.	Shows evidence of attempts to use genre conventions and to use the most obvious disciplinary conventions to shape the writing.
Sources and evidence	Demonstrates purposeful use of sources and evidence to develop the writing in sophisticated ways.	Demonstrates consistent use of appropriate, relevant sources and evidence to support the purpose(s).	Shows attention to using appropriate sources and evidence in a systematic way to begin supporting the purpose(s) with some consistency.	Shows some attention to providing evidence in a systematic way or to referencing sources of evidence consistent with the purpose(s).
Control of syntax and mechanics	Demonstrates error-free, idiomatic prose that artfully conveys meaning to readers with clarity, fluency and sophistication.	Demonstrates consistently error-free, idiomatic prose and clearly conveys meaning to readers.	Demonstrates usually error-free, idiomatic prose that generally conveys meaning to readers.	Demonstrates numerous errors and non-idiomatic sentence constructions that impede meaning.