
University of South Carolina
General Education Assessment Criteria—Written Communication
<http://ipr.sc.edu/effectiveness/assessment/criteria/written.htm>

Goal

Students will communicate clearly in written English, demonstrating their comprehension, analysis, and critical interrogation of a variety of written texts.

Objective A. Students' writing will demonstrate knowledge of the subject. This criterion describes the accuracy, extensiveness, and perspective of the knowledge which the writer exhibits. This criterion also assesses the degree to which the writer's information meets the content requirements of a specific assignment

4 OUTSTANDING

Appropriateness: The writer fulfills or exceeds all of the assigned content requirements.

Accuracy: The writer's knowledge of the subject is accurate throughout.

Extensiveness: The writer exhibits convincing range and quality of knowledge, having done appropriate research, if applicable.

Perspective: The information presented reveals the writer's assimilation and understanding of the material. The writer is convincingly aware of alternative points of view AND of implications beyond the immediate subject.

3 EFFECTIVE

Appropriateness: The writer fulfills the important content requirements of the assignment.

Accuracy: The writer's knowledge of the subject is accurate throughout except in minor details.

Extensiveness: The writer seems informed on the subject, having done appropriate research, if applicable.

Perspective: The information presented reveals the writer's assimilation and understanding of the material. The writer seems aware of alternative points of view OR of implications beyond the immediate subject.

2 ADEQUATE

Appropriateness: The writer fulfills some of the important content requirements of the assignment.

Accuracy: The writer's knowledge of the subject is generally accurate, though flawed.

Extensiveness: The writer exhibits limited range or quality of knowledge, having done minimal appropriate research, if applicable.

Perspective: The information presented reveals that the writer has only partially assimilated or understood the material. The writer shows some awareness of alternative points of view OR of implications beyond the immediate subject.

1 INEFFECTIVE

Appropriateness: The writer fails to address the important requirements of the assignment.

Accuracy: The writer's knowledge of the subject is generally inaccurate.

Extensiveness: The writer's knowledge of the subject lacks range or quality.

Perspective: The information presented reveals the writer's failure to assimilate or to understand the material. The writer's assertions lack awareness of alternative points of view AND of implications beyond the immediate subject.

Objective B. Students' writing will demonstrate awareness of the reader. This criterion concerns the writer's awareness of a known, assumed, or likely reading audience. In demonstrating this awareness, the writer must accommodate the reader's attitudes toward or familiarity with the subject, as well as the reader's comprehension level. The writer's development, diction, and emphasis will reflect the degree to which the writer has identified and is addressing those readers.

4 OUTSTANDING

Development: The writer's explanations and uses of evidence, illustrations, or other definitive details are highly appropriate for the reader.

Diction: The writer's word choices clearly demonstrate an awareness of the reader. The language seems deliberately chosen to aid the reader's understanding of the subject (including definitions where appropriate).

Emphasis: The writer's discussion or argumentation is consistently clear and appropriate to the reader and to the purpose. In emphasizing important points, the writer uses evidence logically and carefully.

3 EFFECTIVE

Development: The writer's explanations and uses of evidence, illustrations, or other definitive details are generally appropriate for the reader.

Diction: The writer's word choices demonstrate an awareness of the reader. The language is consistent and seems generally appropriate to the reader's understanding of the subject (including definitions where appropriate).

Emphasis: The writer's discussion or argumentation is generally clear and appropriate to the reader and to the purpose. In emphasizing important points, the writer generally uses evidence logically and carefully.

2 ADEQUATE

Development: The writer makes some attempt to provide evidence, illustrations, or other definitive details for the reader, but some information is either extraneous or insufficient.

Diction: The writer's word choices indicate an awareness of the reader, but the identity of the reader is either unclear or inappropriate in some respects. Although the vocabulary seems fairly consistent, the language seems chosen more for the writer's convenience than for the reader's understanding.

Emphasis: The writer's discussion or argumentation is generally clear or appropriate to the reader and to the purpose, but may be lacking in some aspect of the use of logic or evidence.

1 INEFFECTIVE

Development: The writer generally lacks an awareness of the reader, for the discussion lacks evidence, illustrations, or other definitive details.

Diction: The writer's word choices fail to reflect an awareness of the reader because either the vocabulary or the reference to the reader is inconsistent or inappropriate.

Emphasis: The writer's discussion or argumentation is generally unclear or inappropriate to the reader and to the purpose. The writing lacks emphasis, or is seriously defective in the use of logic or evidence.

Objective C. Student's writing will reflect organization appropriate to the purpose and to the interaction between writer and reader. This criterion considers the structure and the coherence of the presentation. Structure refers to the way the writer achieves unity by

focusing and ordering the paragraphs or sections of the material. Coherence refers to the way the writer connects the ideas to provide continuity from point to point and throughout the text. These aspects of organization might vary according to the intended reader and the purpose for writing.

4 OUTSTANDING

Structure: Writer focuses and orders the material to convey a unified point or effect (either stated or implied).

Coherence: The writer provides clear and consistent movement within and between paragraphs and from beginning to end.

3 EFFECTIVE

Structure: The writer focuses and orders the material to convey a generally unified point or effect (either stated or implied).

Coherence: The writer provides movement within and between paragraphs and from beginning to end.

2 ADEQUATE

Structure: The writer provides some focus or order (either stated or implied) to the material, but the structure is somewhat unclear.

Coherence: The writer provides movement within and between paragraphs and from beginning to end, but this movement is at times either unclear or awkward.

1 INEFFECTIVE

Structure: The writer provides little or no focus or order (either stated or implied) to the material.

Coherence: The writer provides little movement within and between the paragraphs and from beginning to end.

Objective D. Student's writing will reflect format appropriate to the writing situation.

Students' writing will demonstrate the use of a written or printed format appropriate to the writing situation. Format may include spelling, capitalization, footnoting/bibliography forms, graphics, or any other elements of typography or appearance.

4 OUTSTANDING

The text is clearly legible. The format is both appropriate and attractive. The writer misspells no words (or makes only a rare misspelling in a long or complex text).

3 EFFECTIVE

The text is clearly legible. The format is appropriate. The writer's misspellings are few in proportion to the length and complexity of the text.

2 ADEQUATE

The text is generally legible. The format is acceptable. The writer makes several misspellings in proportion to the length and complexity of the text.

1 INEFFECTIVE

The text is generally illegible. The format is unacceptable. The writers misspellings are frequent enough to be distracting, regardless of the length or complexity of the text.

Objective E. The student's writing will demonstrate the ability to use punctuation to establish and clarify meaning. This criterion considers the writer's use of punctuation marks as means of establishing, clarifying, and reinforcing the meaning of the sentences. All aspects of punctuation are included here, ranging from misuse and omission to more sophisticated uses which exhibit the writer's command of punctuation to convey meaning.

4 OUTSTANDING

The writer's punctuation is clear, appropriate, and purposeful. The writer consistently exhibits a command of punctuation, as indicated by the appropriate use of sophisticated or varied punctuation.

3 EFFECTIVE

The writer's punctuation is clear, appropriate, and purposeful. An occasional misuse or omission does not interfere with meaning.

2 ADEQUATE

The writer's punctuation is generally clear, appropriate, and purposeful, although misuses or omissions occasionally interfere with meaning.

1 INEFFECTIVE

The writer's misuses or omissions of punctuation frequently interfere with meaning.

Objective F. Students' writing will demonstrate the use of sentence structure to establish and clarify meaning. This criterion describes the writer's control of the elements of sentence construction to establish, clarify, and reinforce the meaning of the sentences. Concerns here include the writer's use not only of appropriate conventions of grammar and usage (e.g., subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, verb forms, etc.) but also of sentence patterns to establish relationships among ideas (e.g., coordination, subordination, parallelism).

4 OUTSTANDING

Syntax: The writer's use of clauses to establish sentence patterns consistently reinforces or emphasizes relationships among ideas.

Clarity: All parts of the sentence agree clearly and logically. The writer demonstrates a consistently good grasp of appropriate usage, grammar, and idiom. The sentences contain no misplaced words or phrases. The word order also seems deliberately and appropriately chosen for emphasis or for reinforcing the intended meaning.

Completeness: All sentences are grammatically complete.

3 EFFECTIVE

Syntax: For the most part, the writer's use of clauses to establish sentence pattern generally reinforces or emphasizes relationships among ideas.

Clarity: An isolated grammar or usage error does not obstruct clear and immediate understanding of the intended meaning. An isolated sentence contains a misplaced word or phrase, but such phrasing does not confuse the meaning.

Completeness: All sentences are grammatically complete.

2 ADEQUATE

Syntax: The writer's use of clauses to establish sentence patterns reflects relationships among idea, but connections might sometimes be inappropriate or weak.

Clarity: Grammar or usage errors may appear, but they do not seriously confuse the intended meaning. An occasional sentence contains a misplaced word or phrase, which confuses the meaning.

Completeness: Except for an isolated error, all sentences are grammatically complete.

1 INEFFECTIVE

Syntax: Few, if any, sentence patterns reflect appropriate relationships among ideas.

Clarity: Grammar or usage errors frequently confuse the intended meaning. More than an occasional sentence contain misplaced words or phrases which confuse the meaning.

Completeness: The writing exhibits more than an isolated failure to recognize the grammatical completeness of the sentence.

Objective G. Students' writing will demonstrate style, personal voice, and coherence as a communicator. Students' writing will demonstrate the writer's personal stance or voice as a communicator, which includes tone, point of view, attitude or personality. It also assesses the originality of the overall presentation, including the writer's ability to control the elements of writing to please, convince, or otherwise affect the reader.

4 OUTSTANDING

The writer's tone or general control of language consistently reflects a confident or authoritative central "voice" or "personality." Word choice is consistently precise, varied, economical or inventive. The writing clearly shows stylistic talent.

3 EFFECTIVE

The writer's tone or control of language generally reflects a confident or authoritative central "voice" or "personality ." Word choice is generally precise, varied, economical, or inventive. The writing exhibits some success at style.

2 ADEQUATE

A central "voice" or "personality" is evident, though inconsistent in minor ways. Word choice is occasionally precise, varied, economical, or inventive. Stylistic awkwardness may be evident, but is not seriously distracting.

1 INEFFECTIVE

The writer's tone or general control of language is so lacking in consistency that little central "voice" or personality" is evident. Word choice generally lacks precision, variety, economy, or inventiveness. Severe stylistic awkwardness is evident.

Objective H. Student's writing will reflect comprehension of other written texts and description, analysis, and synthesis of information and ideas appropriate to the assignment at any level.

4 OUTSTANDING

Identifies the subject very thoroughly; reflects highly developed observational skills; makes appropriate and reasonable inferences from the observations; sees relationships and relates to existing knowledge, skills or larger context.

3 EFFECTIVE

Identifies the subject well; reflects good observational skills; makes inferences which are, for the most part, reasonable and appropriate; sees relationships and relates to existing knowledge.

2 ADEQUATE

Identifies the subject clearly; shows reasonable observational skills; makes several reasonable inferences and relates to existing knowledge.

1 INEFFECTIVE

Identifies the subject somewhat; shows undeveloped observational skills; makes unreasonable or inappropriate inferences; sees most obvious relationship but does not relate to existing knowledge.
