

CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVE WRITING

(Adapted for Entering Graduate Students, 8/06)

In a given piece of writing, the student should show the following abilities to the level indicated:

Preliminary: Follows directions: yes ___ no ___

1. Connects with audience through ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING CONTEXT (clarifying, in a manner appropriate to a specified audience, limits of the situation and sources of thinking)

- L1 Gives audience some sense of focus and purpose (*What I am telling whom and why?*)
- L2 Throughout the writing, provides and maintains a sense of focus and purpose
- L3 Takes responsibility for own ideas and distinguishes them from those of others
- L4 Clearly articulates relationships between ideas/concepts out of an academic framework/theory and those out of her own thinking

Graduate Level: As a professional,

- Shows explicit awareness of one's own ideas as claims rather than truths in the context of disciplinary/professional discourse
- Shows awareness of historical precedent

2. Connects with audience through VERBAL EXPRESSION (word choice/style/tone—reflecting awareness of the audience's degree of knowledge, values, need for clarity, right to an opinion, and expectation of interest)

- L1 Uses language that shows some awareness of appropriate style/tone and varied word choice
- L2 Uses language that shows general awareness of appropriate style/tone and varied word choice — avoiding vague, empty, and condescending expression
- L3 Uses language that shows consistent awareness of appropriate style/tone and varied word choice
- L4 Uses language that reflects a *refined* awareness of the audience

Graduate Level: As a professional,

- Effectively incorporates word choice/style/tone unique to a particular discipline or profession
- Shows explicit awareness of ambiguity, e.g., that words/concepts may have different meanings for different audiences
- Maintains the individuality of the writer
- Communicates a sense of ongoing dialogue, common ground, and openness to other perspectives

3. Connects with audience through APPROPRIATE CONVENTIONS (usage, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, sentence structure, format, citing and documenting sources)

- L1 Generally follows appropriate conventions
- L2 Consistently follows appropriate conventions
- L3 Applies appropriate conventions to the expression of complex relationships
- L4 Shows a refined sense of appropriate conventions

Graduate Level

As a professional, meets the stylistic requirements of a given discipline or profession

4. **Connects with audience through PURPOSEFUL STRUCTURE (sense of introduction/development/conclusion; focusing by main point made; major/minor connections)**

- L1 Presents a message with recognizable introduction, development, and conclusion
- L2 Establishes and maintains focus on a clear purpose, providing transitions to clarify relationships between most points of development
- L3 Without digression from the focus of the work, consistently articulates relationships between points of development
- L4 Maintains a refined sense of structure appropriate to disciplinary and/or professional contexts

Graduate Level

As a professional, maintains a refined sense of structure in relation to an academic framework integrated into that of a profession

5. **Connects with audience through SUPPORT FOR A POSITION/DEVELOPMENT OF AN IDEA**

- L1 Shows ability to use examples and/or evidence meaningful to audience
- L2 Supports most generalizations with examples and/or evidence meaningful to audience
- L3 Consistently develops ideas through appropriate use of generalizations, examples, and/or evidence
- L4 Develops ideas with appropriate depth, variety, and sufficient interest to engage audience

Graduate Level As a professional,

- Explicitly acknowledges contradictory or conflicting evidence when relevant
- Relates any of own relevant work that she/he has done

6. **Connects with audience through ORIGINAL AND APPROPRIATE CONTENT (criteria may be further contextualized by instructor in discipline)**

- L1 Articulates ideas accurately
- L2 Demonstrates appropriate application of designated or selected ideas
- L3 Identifies key elements that indicate understanding of frameworks/theories
- L4 Articulates original applications, syntheses, and/or evaluations of academic frameworks/theories, validating them with substantiated thinking and appropriately using valid sources

Graduate Level As a professional,

- Effectively integrates academic frameworks/theories into the context of the profession
- Thoughtfully challenges existing frameworks and/or approaches

7. **SELF ASSESSMENT**

- L1 Shows awareness of a few strengths and weaknesses in a written work, based on College criteria
- L2 Shows some understanding of development in writing ability, based on College criteria
- L3 Articulates, providing evidence, a realistic sense of writing performance in all criteria areas
- L4 Shows a refined sense of strengths and weaknesses in all criteria areas

Graduate Level As a professional,

- Shows a refined sense of one's own strengths and weaknesses in all criteria areas, particularly in professional contexts
- Identifies reasonable plans for improvement related to one's own areas of weakness
- Shows explicit awareness of the development of one's own understanding of one's own mental models