

# Rubric for Assessing Essays from W courses (2006)

In writing intensive (W) courses, students are to continue to develop writing skills, including the organization of papers, the development of ideas, and the use, citation, and analysis of supporting evidence. The form that the organization, development, and supporting evidence will take will, of course, vary a great deal by discipline and particular writing assignment. While writing in the context of a discipline, students in W courses should gain familiarity with disciplinary questions and values and should apply the critical thinking or analytical methods of the discipline. The following rubric was used to assess writing from W courses offered during Fall 2006; suggestions for changes can be forwarded to Ron Nickerson, chair of the IFO General Education subcommittee.

	<b>Rating of 1</b> <b>Beginning</b> Does not have skills	<b>Rating of 2</b> <b>Developing</b> Has some skills; still needs some essentials	<b>Rating of 3</b> <b>Accomplished</b> Has foundation, basics	<b>Rating of 4</b> <b>Exemplar</b> Confident in skills; applies them well.
<b>Organization; Development</b>  — Thesis — Idea Development — Use of disciplinary questions, values, and methods of analytical or critical thinking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No clear thesis, central idea or sense of purpose.</li> <li>No clear development of ideas and arguments Ideas are not elaborated or supported or are not related to each other. Seems more a pastiche, or conglomeration of info.</li> <li>Writer appears unaware of disciplinary questions, values, and analytical or critical thinking methods.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vague or overly general thesis, central idea or purpose.</li> <li>Parts of paper not clearly related to thesis, although information is usually relevant. Ideas may stay on too general a plane or may be stated but lack clear, sufficient elaboration or argumentation.</li> <li>Writer uses some disciplinary questions, values, and analytical or critical thinking methods in parts of essay.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coherent thesis that sets up paper well.</li> <li>Sense of “almost there,” ideas on the verge of coming together in interesting, original, or solid way. Not fully or consistently articulated or carried off. May contain occasional lack of clarity, relevance, development, or insight or lack of progress in argument.</li> <li>Writer uses disciplinary questions, values and analytical or critical thinking methods throughout but is unaware of complexity or interrelationships.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coherent thesis, convincingly stated.</li> <li>Key questions, proposed analyses clearly formulated and well-developed. Clear sense of disciplinary values or methods. Supporting points clearly linked to thesis and each other. Conclusions well supported. Easy to follow.</li> <li>Writer shows nuanced understanding of disciplinary questions, values, analytical or critical thinking methods and employs them with confidence and skill.</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting Evidence*</b>  — Selection — Use of — Citation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marked scarcity of credible or relevant evidence.</li> <li>Evidence not analyzed, explained, or applied.</li> <li>Sources not properly cited or not cited at all.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Uneven selection of credible or relevant sources.</li> <li>Evidence not clearly analyzed, explained, or applied, or</li> <li>Occasional lapses in citation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Generally evidence is credible, relevant, and sufficient for purpose.</li> <li>An attempt is made to analyze, explain, or apply the evidence though it falls short in some way.</li> <li>Correct citation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Varied selection of credible sources.</li> <li>Evidence is cogently analyzed, explained, or applied.</li> <li>Consistent, correct citation.</li> </ul>

\* Supporting Evidence = researched sources (from periodicals, websites etc.); materials cited from class texts; lab or research data.

	<b>Rating of 1</b>	<b>Rating of 2</b>	<b>Rating of 3</b>	<b>Rating of 4</b>
<b>Writing Skills</b>  — Focus, purpose — Writing for Reader — Command of writing conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unfocused; generally incoherent.</li> <li>Readers aren't led to a conclusion.</li> <li>Errors in paragraphing, grammar, usage, spelling, or punctuation are numerous and often interfere with meaning.</li> <li>Inappropriate diction for audience, writing occasion, or discipline.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recognizable purpose but some gaps in consistency or clarity;</li> <li>Over-reliance on reader to fill in gaps in logic, context, or explanation.</li> <li>Occasional lapses in diction, paragraphing, grammar or mechanics that interfere with meaning or are inconsistent with “college-level” writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused; clearly stated.</li> <li>Good sense of reader needs and what is needed to accomplish communicative goal, though it falls short.</li> <li>Conforms to standard academic usage, including diction, paragraphing, and mechanics.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused, clearly stated, builds to conclusion or toward main purpose. Overall impressions is that it is a well-written, credible argument.</li> <li>Clear addressing of reader needs and interests;</li> <li>Good grasp of standard academic usage in all aspects.</li> </ul>