

Generic Writing Rubric Using Analytic Method

Author's Name _____		Title of Piece _____				
1	2	3	4	5	6	
Does Not Meet	Partially Meets	Does Not Fully Meet	Meets	More Than Meets	Exceeds	
Content/Ideas	Writing is extremely limited in communicating knowledge, with no central theme.	Writing is limited in communicating knowledge. Length is not adequate for development.	Writing does not clearly communicate knowledge. The reader is left with questions.	Writes related, quality paragraphs, with little or no details.	Writing is purposeful and focused. Piece contains some details.	Writing is confident and clearly focused. It holds the reader's attention. Relevant details enrich writing.
Organization	Writing is disorganized and underdeveloped with no transitions or closure.	Writing is brief and underdeveloped with very weak transitions and closure.	Writing is confused and loosely organized. Transitions are weak and closure is ineffective.	Uses correct writing format. Incorporates a coherent closure.	Writing includes a strong beginning, middle, and end, with some transitions and good closure.	Writing includes a strong beginning, middle, and end, with clear transitions and a focused closure.
Vocabulary/ Word Choice	Careless or inaccurate word choice, which obscures meaning.	Language is trite, vague, or flat.	Shows some use of varied word choice.	Uses a variety of word choices to make writing interesting.	Purposeful use of word choice.	Effective and engaging use of word choice.
Voice	Writer's voice/point of view shows no sense of audience.	Writer's voice/point of view shows little sense of audience.	Writer's voice/point of view shows a vague sense of audience.	Writer uses voice/point of view. Writes with an understanding of a specific audience.	Writer has strong voice/point of view. Writing engages the audience.	Writes with a distinct, unique voice/point of view. Writing is skillfully adapted to the audience.
Sentence Fluency	Frequent run-ons or fragments, with no variety in sentence structure.	Many run-ons or fragments. Little variety in sentence structure.	Some run-ons or fragments. Limited variety in sentence structure.	Uses simple, compound, and complex sentences.	Frequently varied sentence structure.	Consistent variety of sentence structure throughout.
Conventions	Parts of speech show lack of agreement. Frequent errors in mechanics. Little or no evidence of spelling strategies.	Inconsistent agreement between parts of speech. Many errors in mechanics. Little evidence of spelling strategies.	Occasional errors in agreement between parts of speech. Some errors in mechanics. Some evidence of spelling strategies.	Maintains agreement between parts of speech. Few errors in mechanics. Applies basic grade-level spelling.	Consistent agreement between parts of speech. Uses correct punctuation, capitalization, and so on. Consistent use of spelling strategies.	Uses consistent agreement between parts of speech. No errors in mechanics. Creative and effective use of spelling strategies.

This rubric is provided by ReadWriteThink.org, a Thinkfinity website developed by the International Reading Association, the National Council of Teachers of English, and in partnership with the Verizon Foundation.

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EXHIBIT 14.3**Task-Specific Rubric for a Genre: Practical Proposal**

Letter of Transmittal and Document Design	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
- Has an effective letter of transmittal (addressed to appropriate decision maker; serves as executive summary; briefly explains problem, describes proposed solution, and summarizes supporting reasons) - Has professional appearance; good document design with clear headings and appropriately labeled diagrams (if needed); conveys strong ethos	Meets all criteria at high level	Meets some criteria; uneven	Meets few criteria
Presentation of the Problem	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
- Clearly describes the problem without presupposing the solution - Gives problem "presence" (chooses appropriate methods for motivating reader to care about problem) - Adequately develops the problem (shows who is affected, what is at stake); anticipates objections of a skeptical reader who dismisses the problem	Meets all criteria at high level; clear and developed	Meets some criteria; uneven; occasionally thin; some lapses in clarity	Meets few criteria; often unclear or undeveloped
Description of the Proposed Solution	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
- Describes proposed solution clearly - Explains costs; pays attention to practical details; convinces reader that writer has done his or her homework - Solution is made to seem doable - If writer proposes a planning committee to develop details of solution, writer clearly points out the details of a successful solution	Meets all criteria at high level; clear, easy to follow	Meets some criteria; uneven or has some lapses in clarity or development	Meets few criteria; often unclear or undeveloped
Justification for Proposed Solution	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
- Strongly motivates reader to act on the proposal; designs justification section by imagining chief reasons for audience resistance - States clear, effective reasons in support of proposal - Supports reasons with effective evidence - Effectively ties into values and beliefs of audience	Meets all criteria at high level; clear, easy to follow	Meets some criteria; uneven or has some lapses in clarity or development	Meets few criteria; often unclear or undeveloped

(Continued)

Overall Clarity of Writing	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
- Follows reader-expectation theory (forecasting, mapping; old/new contract; strong organization with topic sentences at head of paragraphs) - Is clear, concise, adequately developed, and graceful - Avoids errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, or spelling	Meets all criteria at high level	Meets some criteria; uneven	Meets few criteria
Overall Effectiveness of Document	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
- Effectively accomplishes writer's purpose of calling attention to a problem, proposing a solution, and giving strong reasons for acting on the proposal - Will make a persuasive first impression on intended audience if sent in present form - Shows strong ethos—gives decision maker a favorable impression of the writer's professional motives, and good will	Ready to submit with only minor revisions/ edits	Good potential but some/ significant revision or editing still needed	Back to the drawing board

EXHIBIT 14.4**Task-Specific Rubric for an Assignment Requiring Graphics**

The assignment: You are a technical writer for an environmental organization that advocates for a coherent national energy policy. Periodically this organization publishes one-page informational pieces aimed at the general public. (Typically, the organization buys newspaper space for the pieces, which are desktop published in a two-column format that wraps around one or more inserted visuals—see attached example.) You are asked to write one of these one-page informational pieces on some meaningful “story” related to energy production and consumption, as shown in Table 888, “Energy Supply and Disposition by Type of Fuel: 1960–2003” from the U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistical Abstract of the United States: 2006*. Your goal is to pull information from the table to raise public consciousness about an environmental problem. Make your piece camera-ready by using a two-column format in which text wraps around at least one rhetorically effective graphic.

Rubric for Graphics Assignment

Quality of content (tells a significant energy story)	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
Increases reader's understanding of an environmental problem related to energy Has a clear informative purpose aimed at raising consciousness Uses “new” or “surprising” information to change reader's original view about some aspect of energy production or consumption Shows significance of the issue Is clearly written and easy to follow	Meets all criteria at high level; clear and easy to follow	Meets some criteria; uneven or has some lapses in clarity or development	Meets few criteria; often unclear or undeveloped

Quality of graphics	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
Graphics are visually appealing and easy to read Graphics have effective titles that refer to all pertinent dimensions of the graphic (both axes, legends) Graphics have effective labels, legends Graphics are effectively referenced in text	Meets all criteria at high level; clear and developed	Meets some criteria; uneven; some lapses in clarity	Meets few criteria; often unclear or undeveloped
Quality of the interrelationship between graphics and words	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
Follows principle of independent redundancy (tells in words the same story told by the graphic) Chooses effective details from the graphic to highlight the graphic's message Is easy to follow—reader readily sees how graphic supports story and story supports graphic	Meets all criteria at high level; clear, easy to follow	Meets some criteria; uneven or has some lapses in clarity or development	Meets few criteria; often unclear or undeveloped
Has strong overall effectiveness (professional appearance, clarity, impact)	10 9 8	7 6 5 4	3 2 1 0
Is camera-ready, formatted to look like the model example Effectively integrates graphics into the page design Is clear, well-organized, concise, adequately developed, and graceful Is well-edited, without errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, or spelling (see separate reduction for editing errors)	Meets all criteria at high level	Meets some criteria; uneven	Meets few criteria
Deductions for Rule-Based Errors in Grammar, Punctuation, Usage, or Spelling			
Positive ethos +5 0 -3	Annoying noise -5 -8 -10	Errors destroy ethos -12 -15	

Different Methods of Describing Performance Levels

Finally, analytic rubrics can differ in the way they specify levels of achievement for each criterion. The most common approach, illustrated in Exhibit 14.1, gradually "steps down" the descriptors from level to level (in this case, six levels) to indicate different degrees of performance or merit. Typical step-down language includes terms such as these:

always	usually	some of the time	rarely
fully	adequately	partially	minimally
high or broad	adequate	limited	very limited

EXHIBIT 14.7**Holistic Scale for Grading Physics Microthemes.**

- 6, 5** Microthemes in this category will show a confident understanding of the physics concepts and will explain those concepts clearly to the intended audience. A 6 theme will be clearly written throughout; will contain almost no errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar; and will have enough development to provide a truly helpful explanation to learners. A 5 theme will still be successful in teaching the physics concepts to the intended audience but may have more errors or somewhat less development than a 6. The key to microthemes in the 6, 5 category is that they must show a correct understanding of the physics and explain the concept clearly to a new learner.
- 4, 3** Microthemes in this category will reveal to the instructor that the writer probably understands the physics concepts, but lack of clarity in the writing or lack of fully developed explanations means that the microtheme would not teach the concept to new learners. Microthemes in the 4, 3 category are usually "you know what I mean" essays: someone who already understands the concepts can tell that the writer probably does, too, but someone who does not already understand the concepts would not learn anything from the explanation. This category is also appropriate for clearly written essays that have minor misunderstandings of the physics concepts or for accurate essays full of sentence-level errors.
- 2, 1** These microthemes will be unsuccessful either because the writer fails to understand the physics concepts, because the number of errors is so high that the instructor cannot determine how much the writer understands, or because the explanations lack even minimum development. Give a score of 2 or 1 if the writer misunderstands the physics, even if the essay is otherwise well written. Also give a score of 2 or 1 to essays so poorly written that the reader can't understand them.

EXHIBIT 14.8**Elaborate Rubric for a Scientific Paper in Chemistry****Introduction****General background and theory**

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Adequately sets the stage for the specific context and relevance of the experimental aim. Background information and theory are concise and correct.			Inadequately sets the stage for the specific context and relevance of the experimental aim. Background information and theory are somewhat broad, wordy, or partly incorrect.			Does not set the stage for the specific context and relevance of the experimental aim. Background information and theory are too broad or wordy and incorrect.		

Specific context and relevance

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	0
Describes why the study is important in the context of the known literature. Naturally leads the reader to the scientific aim. Context is concise and correctly described.			Context is only partly described. Organization confuses link between context and scientific aim. Context is incorrectly described in some places or wordy.			Does not describe why the study is important in the context of the known literature. Does not lead the reader to the scientific aim. Context is incorrectly described and too wordy.		

Scientific aim		
4	3	2
Clear statement of the scientific aim. Reader is sure of the scientific questions being asked. Aim is understood correctly by the author.	Refers generally to scientific goals without focusing on specific scientific questions. Aim is only partly understood by the author.	Unclear, very general, vague. Includes educational objectives. Aim is misunderstood by the author.
Experimental Procedures		
Is the description complete and concise?		
10	8	6
Procedure contains enough information that it is reproducible (through the text or by appropriate referencing). Procedure conveys only necessary and relevant information.	Procedure is missing some critical information required for fully evaluating or reproducing the experiment. Procedure is wordy in some sections. Contains some unnecessary or irrelevant information.	Procedure is so vague that readers cannot begin to evaluate or reproduce the experiment. Procedure is verbose and contains large quantities of unnecessary or irrelevant information.
Data/Results		
Text		
10	8	6
Text is complete and concise. Data interpretation not included.	Text is wordy or incomplete in some sections.	Text is missing or contains large amounts of incorrect or irrelevant information.
Data choice, data processing, figures		
5	4	3
Contain all data that support or contradict the arguments made in the discussion. Contain no irrelevant or redundant data. Data are processed correctly.	Missing some critical data or contain irrelevant or redundant data. Data are processed incorrectly in some places.	Missing most critical data or contain large amount of irrelevant or redundant data. Data are processed incorrectly in most places.
Data/figures presented in a logical, organized, professionally formatted fashion		
5	4	3
Presentation choice (table, graph, or figure) enhances understanding. Appropriate legends and captions are included. Data format is correct.	Presentation confuses understanding of information. Legends and captions are unspecific or difficult to follow. Data format is mostly correct.	Presentation choice makes understanding the data impossible. Legends or captions are missing. Data are improperly formatted.
Discussion		
Is discussion persuasive?		
10	8	6
Effectively uses data to address scientific aim. Key data are interpreted correctly. Deeply thought-out argument that logically leads to conclusions.	Relationship between data and scientific aim sometimes muddled. Key data are not always interpreted correctly. Uses some important data. Argument is sometimes weak.	Does not effectively use data to address scientific aim. Key data are interpreted incorrectly. Fails to use the key data. Argument is weak or nonexistent.

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