

Writing Skills Rubric

	Unacceptable 1	Beginning 2	Competent 3	Skilled 4	Exemplary 5
Main Idea/Thesis	Overall position is not evident. Topic as expressed is superficial or undeveloped.	Overall position is evident, but often too simplistic. Topic is also simplistic and one-dimensional.	Overall position is clear with a sense of developed ideas. Topic is interesting and significant, but not deeply explored in needed areas	Overall position is clear and developed. Topic is interesting, significant, and is engaged from several angles.	Overall position is well articulated and thoroughly developed. Topic is interesting, significant, and intellectually challenging with multiple facets addressed.
Argument	No argumentative structure is evident. Ideas are unconnected.	Argumentative structure is rudimentary. Claims are repeated rather than developed. Few objections are addressed and may be misrepresented.	Argumentative structure is evident but sometimes simplistic. Objections are addressed but formulaically.	Argumentative structure is evident. Objections are taken seriously and typically addressed fair-mindedly.	Argumentative structure is clearly evident. Objections are taken seriously and addressed fair-mindedly with great skill.
Evidence	Claims are not supported by reliable evidence from credible sources, making the paper unconvincing	Some claims are supported by valid, reliable evidence, but support is inconsistent, making the paper less than convincing.	Claims are typically supported by valid, reliable evidence from credible sources, making the paper for the most part convincing.	Claims are almost always supported by valid, reliable sources, so that the paper is generally convincing.	Claims are supported by reliable, valid evidence from credible sources and effectively synthesized in a very convincing manner.
Organization	Ideas appear unconnected. Several paragraphs are incoherent, lacking clear topic sentences and developed by restatement; they may contain irrelevant information. Paper shows serious lack of unity and coherence. Introduction and/or conclusion may be weak, trite, or nonexistent.	The paper is organized, though simplistically. Paragraphs are occasionally incoherent, without strong topic sentences and clear development. An introduction and conclusion are attempted but are perfunctory or formulaic. The introduction may be overly general and the conclusion may simply restate the thesis.	The introduction provides some context for the paper and states a thesis, though in a predictable way. Paragraphs are usually clear with serviceable topic sentences, development, and information. Main points are logically structured. Transitions provide coherence, but may be formulaic. The conclusion summarizes the paper but does not explore implications or significance.	The introduction sets the context for the paper and states a clear thesis. Nearly all paragraphs are coherent with strong topic sentences, developing systematically so that meaning is clear. Main points are clear and logically structured. Transitions provide a sense of coherence. The conclusion summarizes the paper and makes some effort to explore implications and significance.	The introduction skillfully captures reader attention while establishing the context for the paper. All paragraphs are coherent with apt topic sentences, developed so the meaning is exceptionally clear and easy to follow. All the main ideas are clear and logically structured. Transitions provide a strong sense of coherence. The conclusion summarizes and explores implications and significance.

Readability	Awkward phrasing, unskillful or inappropriate voice/tone, and unsophisticated and/or imprecise vocabulary hinder understanding.	Awkward phrasing, unskillful or inappropriate voice/tone, and unsophisticated and/or imprecise vocabulary distract from the paper's ideas.	Phrasing is generally effective; voice/tone and vocabulary are generally suitable for the paper's ideas and only occasionally work against its ideas.	Clear phrasing, appropriate management of voice and tone, and vocabulary enhance the paper's ideas.	Skillful phrasing, adept management of voice and tone, and apt word choice create an inviting paper.
Conventions	Numerous errors in grammar, usage, spelling and punctuation seriously impede meaning. Necessary documentation is missing.	Several errors in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation distract the reader and impede meaning. Problems with needed documentation exist	Errors in grammar usage, spelling, and punctuation are noticeable, but do not seriously impede the reader. Documentation is usually correct.	There are occasional errors in grammar, usage, spelling, and punctuation that do not impede the reader. Documentation of sources is correct.	There are very few or no mechanical errors in the paper. Documentation of sources is correct.
Overall Impression	The writer struggles in constructing and presenting a significant position. Paragraphing and overall organization hinder effectiveness. Ideas are asserted rather than developed or are largely underdeveloped. Language suffers from distracting errors at the sentence level. Falls short of college-level writing.	The writer presents a significant position that falls shy of being convincing. Overall organization and support need significant development. Frequent though not pervasive problems at the sentence-level. Paragraphing is inconsistent. Marginal college-level writing.	The writer presents a significant position that is generally convincing, but has some weaknesses. Paragraphs are typically organized and add to the development of ideas. Support is good, but sometimes inadequate. Organization is evident but sometimes undeveloped. There are occasional but not overly distracting, sentence-level errors. Acceptable college-level writing.	The writer presents a significant and thoughtful position that is for the most part convincing. Paragraphs are well organized and contribute to the development of ideas. Support is good with infrequent weak areas. Organization is clear. Sentence-level errors are infrequent. Good college-level writing.	The writer presents a significant and interesting position that is convincing and thought provoking. Paragraphs are skillfully organized and add to the development of ideas. Support is sound with rare or no weak areas. Sentence-level errors are rare to non-existent. Exemplary college-level writing.