University Expository Writing Rubric – Explanation of Traits

Updated February 3, 2011

PURPOSE

• Does the writer address the assignment and write with a purpose that is clear to the reader?
• Is there an identifiable thesis?
• Does the writer understand and meet the audience's expectations?

SYNTHESIS

• Is the paper organized both locally (within paragraphs) and globally (as a whole)?
• Does the organizational strategy best express the purpose?
• Does the writer make connections between (un)related ideas, texts, perspectives, and experiences to construct a cohesive depiction of the topic?

SUPPORT

• Is the thesis fully supported with relevant evidence or does the essay rely on broad and general assertions?
• Is repetition mistaken for development?
• Are there errors in logic?

STYLE

• Does the writer make effective stylistic choices in terms of paragraphing, sentence structure, word choice, tone, introductions, conclusions, etc?

MECHANICS

• Is the essay free of errors - spelling, punctuation, grammar - that consistently impede or even distort meaning?
**UNIVERSITY EXPOSITORY WRITING RUBRIC – ULO COMMITTEE**  
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| Trait: | Poor/No Attainment  
Score =0 | Minimal Attainment  
Score =1 | Average Attainment  
Score =2 | Good Attainment  
Score = 3 | Superior Attainment  
Score =4 |
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| **Purpose:**
Addresses the assignment. Clearly articulates the focus/thesis and writes with an awareness of the audience’s expectations.
| Disregards assignment. No discernible focus/thesis. Unaware of audience’s expectations.
| Seems aware of the assignment’s goals, but does not consistently meet them. Focus is mentioned, but shifts frequently, making the purpose unclear. Possible inappropriate shifts in audience.
| Consistent effort to address assignment. Thesis/focus is generally clear, may be lost at times. Writes with an eye to audience, but some inconsistencies are evident.
| The assignment is addressed. Thesis/focus is identifiable throughout the essay, but occasionally strays off topic. Seems aware of the audience’s expectations and attempts to cater the prose accordingly.
| Assignment’s goals are shared by the writer, though the writer does not seem confined by them. Fully controls thesis throughout the essay and consistently meets the audience’s expectations. |
| **Synthesis:**
Organizes texts/ideas/ information into a cohesive, organized discussion (both globally and locally).
| No attempt to synthesize texts/ideas; organization feels random making cohesion impossible.
| Preliminary attempts to synthesize texts/ideas; discussion feels unorganized at times. Yet, some paragraphs/sections hold together.
| Some attempts to synthesize complex texts/ideas, but cannot sustain the effort. Global organization is clear, but local organization may stray.
| Synthesizes texts/ideas with some expertise and begins to formulate a cohesive look at the topic, but lacks some sophistication. Some missteps with organization.
| Synthesizes texts/ideas with expertise and formulates a sophisticated, complex discussion of the topic. Organization feels deliberate and complements the topic. |
| **Support:**
Assertions and/or conclusions are fully developed and are based on appropriate evidence.
| Assertions and/or conclusions are difficult to locate and are unsupported. Needless repetition takes the place of development.
| Assertions and/or conclusions are identifiable, but are not supported by evidence. Some repetition persists and makes reading difficult at times.
| Assertions and/or conclusions are occasionally supported by evidence. Some generalities persist.
| Clear assertions/conclusions are made; evidence is usually used effectively, but some errors in logic are detectable. Development aided by the inclusion of some key details.
| Makes fully developed assertions and/or draws logical conclusions that are supported by the evidence. Consistently includes details that point to the complex nature of the topic. |
| **Style:**
Writing is stylistically complex (i.e. sentence structure, word choice, transitions, tone, and paragraphing).
| Simple sentences and word choice; paragraphs break randomly and may lack topic sentences.
| Attempts at complex sentences/language and deliberate paragraph breaks, but awkward moments persist.
| Demonstrates some adeptness when making stylistic choices, but style lacks consistency and refinement.
| Generally writes with complex sentence structure and language; evidence of stylistic complexity.
| Evidence of consistent, deliberate, and refined stylistic presence on the page. |
| **Mechanics:**
Writing is free of spelling and punctuation errors. Content is clearly expressed.
| Pervasive errors distort meaning and make reading difficult.
| Some errors are significant and detract from the meaning. Piece requires closer editing.
| Some errors impede reading but the content is generally clear.
| Minor errors are present, but not too distracting. Content is clear.
| The writing is near perfect with almost no errors. |