

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
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.