

Rubric for General Education Writing Assessment

Paper number: ____ Thinking score: ____ Voice score: ____ Literacy score: ____ Overall:

Rank paper on each of the “primary traits” defined below, using a six-point scale where points are assigned in the following fashion:

6: outstanding	3: limited
5: strong	2: seriously flawed
4: adequate	1: fundamentally deficient

Thinking:

Thinking is a dimension concerned with reasoning powers. (1) Strong thinkers engage in *critical*, *associative*, and *concessive* thinking, where “critical thinking” means a type of evaluative process founded on analysis and employing appropriate reasoning strategies to uncover and assess implication and context of discourse or to adduce support for an arguable position; where “associative thinking” has to do with the ability to make connections and applications, comparisons and contrasts; and where “concessive thinking” has to do with the sensitivity to scope, options, and uncertainty. (2) They demonstrate the characteristics of an autonomous thinker, i.e., that they can think freely, and rise above mere conditioned response. (3) They can uncover, shape, extend, and delimit knowledge. They can grasp a text and employ its ideas.

Apart from the lack of evidence of the dimensions of thinking summarized above, weak thinkers, (-1) can at best give back what they have been given. (-2) Their thinking is limited to various forms of repeating what they have been told or making affectively based assertions. (-3) They give the impression of shaped rather than shaping thinkers.

Voice:

Voice is a dimension concerning the quality of communication. (1) Writers with a strong voice are able to make an impact on the reader and communicate with some resonance. (2) They may come across as especially creative or imaginative. (3) Perhaps they take risks or write with evident energy. (4) They show ownership of what they say, and they seem to be responding to a felt need; it is clear why they are writing and where they are coming from. (5) They get their point across, and, at the very least, they can summarize attentively; they are coherent.

Apart from the lack of evidence for voice summarized above, writers with inadequate voice (-1) give the impression of being reluctant writers. (-2) Their efforts are muddled, mute, obscure, incomplete, or contradictory. (-3) Perhaps the paper seems canned or pre-fabricated. (-4) They go through the motions but show no commitment. (-5) They are unable to compel attention.

Literacy:

Literacy is a dimension concerning awareness of an academic context. (1) The literate writer has a grasp of writing conventions. (2) Content is informed by knowledge of scholarship and literary benchmarks. (3) Literate writers are more than just functionally literate. (4) They can make allusions and convey an awareness of our intellectual traditions. (4) They use language and advance ideas that are culturally informed. (5) They are knowledgeable and they can write appropriate to the level and interests of a serious and scholarly audience.

Apart from lack of evidence of literacy as defined above, writers who are inadequately literate (-1) may have little understanding of the diction, grammar, punctuation, and usage conventions of formal written English. (-2) They also may appear to have little understanding or knowledge of other literature. (-3) Their entire awareness may be circumscribed by popular culture and the here-and-now.

Notes: