Written Communication

## **Team:**

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## **Short Definition:**

**Written Communication** is the ability to develop and express ideas through writing, including communicating to a diverse set of audiences through a variety of genres and mediums using text, graphics, and data.

## **Long Definition:**

**Written Communication** is the development and expression of ideas in writing. It involves learning to work in many genres and mediums and can utilize different writing platforms and combine texts, graphics, and data. Writers will analyze their contexts to define and write toward a diverse set of audience needs. Written communication skills develop through clarifying ideas, drafting, and revision, where substantive feedback is provided by both peers and faculty mentors. Strategies for clarifying ideas include reflection, brainstorming, outlining, and collaboration. Students hone a range of communicative tools, including organization, argumentation, word choice, style, formatting, and sentence-level clarity.

## **Glossary**:

**Audience:**  A group of readers for whom a written work is intended; ex. children, older adults

**Disciplinary conventions**: Formal and informal rules that constitute what is seen generally as appropriate within different academic fields, e.g. introductory strategies, use of passive voice or first person point of view, expectations for thesis or hypothesis, expectations for kinds of evidence and support that are appropriate to the task at hand, use of primary and secondary sources to provide evidence and support arguments and to document critical perspectives on the topic. Writers will incorporate sources according to genre and disciplinary conventions, according to the writer's purpose for the text.

**Genres**: Particular kinds of texts and/or media that guide formatting, organization, and stylistic choices, e.g. lab reports, academic papers, poetry, webpages, or personal essays.

**Medium**: A medium is the way in which a piece of writing is delivered (email versus a mailed paper copy, for example)

**Synthesis**: Highlighting relationships and interconnections of disparate ideas and perspectives

**Voice:** The writer’s vocabulary, tone, point of view, and syntax that makes phrases, sentences, and paragraphs flow in a particular manner

## **Assessment Examples:**

*We designed this rubric to be compatible with a variety of writing genres and disciplinary practices. “Evidence” and “sources” were left intentionally vague to encompass various types of media.*

* Writing Portfolios, in which students submit multiple drafts of the same project to show development and revision (an ideal artifact for assessment of the “Reflection & Process Awareness” dimension especially)
* Literacy or personal narratives
* Rhetorical or Genre Analysis
* Case analysis
* Literary Analysis
* Literature Reviews
* Film, book, music, art, or movie reviews
* Position papers
* Creative nonfiction essays
* Research essays or proposals
* Scientific reports
* Nursing or teaching portfolios

All examples can include a reflective cover letter, writer’s memo, or “Dear Reader” letter, where students briefly reflect on their writing process.

## **Written Communication Rubric:**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1**  **Beginning** | **2**  **Developing** | **3**  **Proficient/ Transforming** | **4**  **Exemplary** |
| **Audience, Context & Purpose** | Purpose for the piece needs additional definition; audience and purpose for the piece is not clear without explicit mention by the writer, or is not reflected clearly throughout the piece; the choices the writer has made do not match the intended audience’s expectations | Purpose is clear but inconsistent; Writer shows some awareness of an audience’s perspectives and values; some of the choices the writer has made match the intended audience’s expectations, while other choices may not match well. | Purpose is clearly defined and consistently supported throughout; writer shows substantial awareness of an audience’s perspectives and values; the choices the writer has made match the intended audience’s expectations throughout the piece. | Purpose is narrowly defined and contextualized and supported throughout; Writer demonstrates additional work to understand the intended audience’s perspectives and values; the choices the writer has made match the intended audience’s expectations throughout the piece. |
| **Idea Development** | Uses mostly appropriate and relevant content to illustrate simple ideas in some parts of the work.  Progression of ideas may be illogical, unclear or shift without explanation | Uses appropriate and relevant content to begin to situate their thinking and explore ideas through most of the work.  Mainly logical progression of ideas throughout | Uses appropriate, relevant, and persuasive content with context guiding idea development throughout.  Clear, consistent, logical progression of ideas | Uses appropriate, relevant, and persuasive content to illustrate expertise in the subject, conveying the writer's understanding of multiple perspectives, and how knowledge is contextual.  Clear, consistent, and logical engagement with ideas; also adds original insights. |
| **Genre & Disciplinary Conventions**  *Formal and informal rules inherent in the expectations for writing in particular forms and/or academic fields* | Inconsistent and/or inappropriate use of expectations particular to a specific discipline and/or genre, including structure, types of evidence used, presentation of content, formatting, and stylistic choices. | Responds to expectations appropriate to a specific discipline and/or genre, including structure, types of evidence used, presentation of content, formatting, and stylistic choices for structure, but may be inconsistent. | Consistently and appropriately responds to expectations particular to a specific discipline and/or genre, including structure, types of evidence used, presentation of content, formatting, and stylistic choices. | Fluently responds to a wide range of expectations particular to a specific discipline and/or genre, including structure, types of evidence used, presentation of content, formatting, and stylistic choices.  Also demonstrates detailed understanding of how genre and discipline-specific choices are responses to particular combinations of audience, context, and purpose. |
| **Integration of Sources** | Little or no integration of relevant sources; excessive reliance on generalizations; may rely heavily on quotations without contextualization. | Partial integration of relevant sources; some reliance on generalizations; demonstrates basic grasp of material through attempts to explain, paraphrase, or summarize material. | Clear integration of and basic synthesis of materials through relational words and transitions; demonstrates reasonable understanding of material through detailed explanation of quotes and/or competent paraphrase/summary. | Sustained synthesis of high-quality source material and argument (if applicable); excellent understanding of material and suggestions for new ideas. |
| **Clarity & Voice** | Sentence-level choices rarely clarify the writer’s goals.  Choices, word order, rhythm, style, and tone may conflict with the text’s broader purpose, without acknowledgment or explanation. Writing may be unclear to the intended audience. | Sentence-level choices occasionally clarify the writer’s intentions  Elements such as word order, rhythm, style, and tone are beginning to connect with the writer’s perspective or support the text’s broader goals, but may still confuse the audience at times. | Sentence-level choices clarify the writer’s intentions.  Elements such as word order, rhythm, style, and tone often connect with the writer’s perspective and support the text’s broader goals. | Sentence-level choices demonstrate a sophisticated clarity of purpose and control.  Elements such as word order, rhythm, style, and tone are consistently grounded in the writer’s perspective and support the text’s broader goals. |
| **Reflection & Process Awareness** | Writer shows little awareness of the choices, habits of mind, and composing processes that lead to effective writing in this context; there is little evidence of writer’s understanding of their writing process or how their written work has developed. | Writer shows some awareness of the choices, habits of mind, and composing processes that lead to effective writing in this context; writer communicates a basic understanding of their own writing process and/or how their written work has developed. | Writer shows substantial awareness of the choices, habits of mind, and composing processes that lead to effective writing in this context; writer communicates a clear understanding of their own writing process and/or how their written work has developed. | Writer shows advanced awareness of the choices, habits of mind, and composing processes that lead to effective writing in this context; writer articulates specific choices in regard to audience, explicit habits of mind, and/or a deep understanding of their own writing process and how their written work has developed. |

Note: Portions of this rubric and glossary were adapted from the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU) VALUE Rubric