

Self-Evaluation

1. For what audience did you write your essay? That is, describe the reader to whom you are appealing through your writing.
2. In the revision process, what have you focused on most with this paper?
3. At this stage, what aspects of the project do you feel work best, and why?
4. At this stage, what aspects of the project are you least satisfied with, and why?
5. What do you think you should do to strengthen your project?
6. What have you learned so far during the writing process?
7. Feel free to add any other comments, reflections, or criticisms (on back if needed).

Reference: Dr. Susan Schorn

Name _____

Date _____

Self Evaluation

Directions: Read through your own paper and grade yourself for each item, 1 being poor, and 5 being excellent.

Purpose:

- _____ There is a well-developed thesis.
- _____ The thesis establishes an insightful set of criteria.
- _____ The introduction establishes the major issues and points.
- _____ The conclusion reiterates the importance of this argument and addresses the thesis.

Content:

- _____ The paper demonstrates excellent development of each idea
- _____ Clearly explained examples support the claim
- _____ The topic is thoroughly researched
- _____ The content is correct

Audience:

- _____ The author is clearly attentive to the values of the intended audience.
- _____ The author defends beliefs not shared by the audience.
- _____ The author handles counter arguments with respect.

Organization:

- _____ The paper contains strong topic sentences
- _____ Each subsequent sentence builds upon the argument suggested in the thesis without digression or repetition.
- _____ Clear transitions connect ideas both on the paragraph level and the sentence level.

Mechanics:

The paper demonstrates mastery over the basics in: (each item is worth 1 point)

- _____ Sentence completeness
- _____ Structure
- _____ Variety
- _____ Word Choice
- _____ Punctuation
- _____ It maintains a clear and efficient style
- _____ It is within the length requirement.

References:

- _____ References are appropriate to the paper.
- _____ They are properly cited in either MLA or APA style.
- _____ There are at least 4 scholarly references.

Final Grade _____

Peer Editing Rubric

Each item is worth 5 points. Please assign a point value for each item on the list, 0 being no credit and 5 being full credit.

Introduction:

- _____ Introduces the topic or provides a thesis
- _____ Sums up the main points or arguments
- _____ Draws the audience in

Body:

- _____ Follows the "roadmap" laid out in the Introduction
- _____ Points flow logically
- _____ Smooth Transitions

Conclusion:

- _____ Sums up the arguments or main points
- _____ Appeals to the reader
- _____ Strong ending

_____ No Grammatical Errors

Total _____

Comments by Grader:

CRITERIA GRID: rate each item as weak, satisfactory, strong and make written comments to support your rating.

Criteria	Comments
Thesis: clear, comprehensive, answers assignment question.	
Evidence/Support for thesis: relevance, strength, credibility.	
Organization: arrangement of ideas, coherence, inclusion of intro and conclusion.	
Mechanics: spelling, grammar, punctuation.	
Overall effectiveness.	

Observations about Essays

These are some of the things that will add strength so much to your critical essays in this class.

1. **Personal referents:** Although a lot of scientific writing avoids using "I" as the subject of its sentences, essays of the type you will write in this class are expressions of your own thinking. Therefore it is appropriate to refer to yourself as you describe your thoughts and ideas.
2. **Examples that come from your own experiences:** One of the best ways to learn any new material is to relate it to your personal experience. So when you use examples from your own background, you are re-enforcing your understanding of the concepts. In addition, it is frequently the case that you write much more realistically and enthusiastically when you are writing about something you know personally. As a reader of your essay, I can appreciate that.
3. **Multiple examples and ideas:** While I would caution you to keep the number of ideas you include realistic, many times you will identify several instances of the ideas you're discussing or several perspectives on an idea. That is a valuable learning tool and indicates a level of creative thinking I like to see.
4. **Error-free (almost):** It may not seem like an important point in writing a paper, but care taken to eliminate mechanical errors is one of the easiest ways to make an instructor treat your paper with more respect. Papers full of words spelled incorrectly or mechanical errors in things like punctuation make a very bad impression on your readers before they've read a single word.
5. **Using your own voice:** The best writing in these papers was that which sounded like you, where I could hear the person talking behind the printed page. The worst writing was when the author was trying to be someone else with someone else's language and rhetoric.

Now I'll summarize the problems or weaknesses that I see repeated in several different essays. If you could avoid these problems, you'd go a long way toward making your writing more effective.

1. **Overly complicated vocabulary:** Many people think that using complex vocabulary is the mark of scholarly writing. While I will admit that a lot of scholarly writing uses obscure or dense wording, that doesn't make it good. The best writing is that which uses vocabulary appropriate for the purpose of the writing. It is important to avoid using a word until you're sure that it fits the context. Sometimes when you try to use elaborate vocabulary, you end up choosing the wrong word or an awkward word where a simpler one would do.
2. **Overly complex sentence structures or passive voice:** A second tendency of those trying to write in a scholarly way is to use long sentences with lots of dependent clauses or to write in passive voice. If the content is complex enough, the addition of complex sentence structures will only compound the problem. If the content is not complex, then using complex sentence structures sounds artificial.

So it's best to reserve complex sentence structure for those times when it is really needed (of which there are not many).

3. **Level of analysis:** There are many levels at which you can approach a topic. You can simply list components without description or example. This is a very surface level of analysis, characteristic of novices in an area. Or you can describe the components by explaining them more fully and giving examples. This level requires a little bit more depth of understanding. But the level at which your college instructors will expect you to write is that of analysis: the search for common themes, threads, components, underlying reasons or other unifying ideas. This level requires going beyond listing. It usually requires that you choose one or two main ideas, especially in such short essays as the ones in this class, and develop those ideas more fully, providing support and examples for the points you want to make. The whole essay should hang together around those themes, from the opening paragraph that sets them up to the closing paragraph that brings everything together.
4. **Transitions:** Part of having a coherent essay is having good transitions between parts. One way to test this is to read the last sentence of one paragraph and the first sentence of the next one. Do they go together? Is the second paragraph the answer to any question raised in the first?
5. **Hyperbole:** This means describing things in exaggerated terms or overdrawn phrases. For example, sometimes essays start with phrases like "Since the dawn of time, mankind has searched for the answer to the question of 'what do we really know'." If the essay were truly about such a grandiose question, that would be ok, but many times the essays that follow are about far more mundane topics. So it's best to stick to a level of generalization that mirrors what you're writing about.