

Writing Assessment Rubric Descriptors¹
Appendix for Dear TLT column, Issue 41.3 (May-June 2017)

Task Fulfillment:

1. Answers the Question

 Strong

1. Extremely satisfactory (8.0)
2. An overall positive effect on the reader (7.0+)
3. Clearly answers the question (7.0)
4. A more than satisfactory attempt at answering the question (6.5+)

 Satisfactory

1. A satisfactory attempt at answering the question (6.5+)
2. An adequate attempt at answering the question (6.0)
3. Answers most of the key points effectively (6.0)
4. Evidence that the question has been understood (6.0)

 Weak

1. Generally fulfills the task (5.5+)
2. Doesn't fully answer the question (5.0)
3. Ideas are limited and overgeneralized (5.0)
4. Needs to focus more on key question words (4.5)

2. Clarity of Ideas

 Strong

1. Extremely satisfactory (8.0)
2. Ideas are clearly developed and supported (7.0)
3. Strong evidence that ideas clarify meaning (6.5+)
4. Writing is logical and well thought out (6.5)

 Satisfactory

1. Logical progression of ideas (6.5)
2. Shows sufficient clarity to have a positive effect on the reader (6.5)
3. Ideas are clearly presented (6.0+)
4. Generally clear, but sometimes ideas are not presented well (6.0)

 Weak

1. Ideas are sometimes unclear (5.5+)
2. Ideas are limited (5.5)
3. Ideas are sometimes difficult to follow (5.0)
4. No clarity of ideas (4.5)

3. Development of Ideas

 Strong

1. Extremely satisfactory (8.0)
2. Ideas are clearly thought out and well developed (7.5)
3. Well-developed argument (7.0)
4. Logical development of ideas (7.0)

¹ We're grateful to Gerry McLellan for contributing this rubric and making it available to everyone.

✚ Satisfactory

1. Development of ideas is satisfactory (6.5)
2. Ideas are developed logically (6.5)
3. Reasonable attempt at addressing topic and developing ideas (6.0)
4. Fair attempt at developing ideas, although errors occur when expressing more complex thoughts (6.0)

✚ Weak

1. Logical flow to most arguments (5.5+)
2. Only some indication that ideas have been fully developed (5.0)
3. Ideas may be limited and lack support (4.5)
4. Need to develop ideas more fully (4.5)

Organization

4. Overall Organization

✚ Strong

1. Extremely satisfactory (8.0)
2. Well organized piece of written work (7.5)
3. Arguments are easily followed and well organized (7.0)
4. Above satisfactory organization (7.0)

✚ Satisfactory

1. Organization is satisfactory (6.5)
2. Overall, a well-organized piece of writing (6.5)
3. Signs of overall organization are evident (6.0)
4. Able to demonstrate some knowledge of organizational skills (6.0)

✚ Weak

1. Signs of organization is evident, but need to show more (5.5+)
2. Some evidence of organization and a logical flow to most arguments (5.5)
3. Writing is reasonably organized (5.0)
4. Little evidence of overall organization (4.0)

5. Paragraph organization, topic sentences, cohesion, signposting

✚ Strong

1. Extremely satisfactory (8.0)
2. In all writing there is clear organization (7.5)
3. Ideas are clear and well organized (6.5)
4. Good use of topic sentences and signposting to highlight ideas (6.5)

✚ Satisfactory

1. Organization is satisfactory (6.0)
2. Arguments and ideas can be followed; linked by cohesive devices (6.0)

✚ Weak

1. Paragraphs are poorly organized (5.0)
2. Little or no evidence of organization (4.0)

Using Sources

6. Can use in-text referencing (information/author prominent) to cite variety of sources

- ✚ Strong
- ✚ Satisfactory
- ✚ Weak

7. Can present references in a bibliography

- ✚ Strong
- ✚ Satisfactory
- ✚ Weak

8. Can integrate sources using direct quotations, paraphrasing & summarizing

- ✚ Strong
- ✚ Satisfactory
- ✚ Weak

Use of Language

9. Can use a variety of sentence structures

- ✚ Strong
 1. Extremely satisfactory (8.0)
 2. Able to incorporate a variety of sentence structures into essay (7.0)
 3. Able to express ideas with clarity and complexity (7.0)
- ✚ Satisfactory
 1. Able to use above satisfactory range of sentence structures (6.5)
 2. Can use a mix of complex and simple structures with a fair degree of accuracy (6.0)
 3. Organization is satisfactory (6.0)
 4. Shows a good awareness of different registers (6.0)
- ✚ Weak
 1. Has a limited control of sentence structures (5.0)
 2. Basic sentence structure okay, but complex sentences show many inaccuracies (5.0)

10. Can use grammar accurately

- ✚ Strong
 1. Extremely satisfactory use of grammar (8.0)
 2. Able to use a variety of complex grammar structures accurately (7.5)
- ✚ Satisfactory
 1. Can use a satisfactory range of grammatical structures (6.5)
 2. Demonstrates a firm grasp of grammar (6.5)
 3. Although errors in grammar exist, they do not impede communication (6.0)
 4. Complex sentences show more grammar inaccuracies (5.5)
- ✚ Weak
 1. Errors in grammar often impede communication (5.0)
 2. Frequent errors impede communication and have a negative effect on the reader (4.5)

11. Can use a variety of vocabulary

- ✚ Strong

1. Extremely satisfactory range of academic vocabulary (8.0)

✚ Satisfactory

1. Satisfactory use of variety of vocabulary (6.5)
2. Wide range of vocabulary with only minor errors (6.0)
3. Errors in vocabulary do not impede comprehension (6.0)

12. Can use academic/subject specific vocabulary accurately

✚ Strong

1. Extremely satisfactory use of academic vocabulary (8.0)
2. Able to demonstrate a wide range of vocabulary (7.5)
3. Demonstrates a wide range and accurate use of vocabulary (7.0)

✚ Satisfactory

1. Satisfactory use of academic vocabulary (6.5)
2. Shows awareness of collocation and register appropriate for the task ((6.5)
3. Adequate range of academic and general vocabulary (6.0)
4. Shows awareness of different registers. There are some errors in word class but they do not impede communication (6.0)
5. Attempts academic vocabulary and beginning to show more awareness (5.5)

✚ Weak

Limited range of vocabulary, both academic and general (5.0)

Academic Style

13. Can use appropriate academic style (hedging, noun phrases, objective approach)

✚ Strong

1. Uses a variety of academic styles extremely appropriately (8.0)
2. Accurate use of academic language (7.0)

✚ Satisfactory

1. Good attempt at academic style

✚ Weak

1. Shows awareness of academic conventions, but errors persist