

Sample Assignments & Rubrics for Top Ten Courses

**The Center for Writing and Writing Instruction
Dothan Campus – Sparks Campus
Fall 2014**

WALLACE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Created by:

Sarah Newman, Elizabeth and Joshua McCormick, and Emily Cosgrove, Ph.D

WELCOME

Greetings, Top Ten Faculty!

Welcome to our Sample Assignments and Rubrics for Top Ten Courses document. We created this document to help fulfill some of the needs expressed during our spring 2014 faculty writing workshops, and we hope that this booklet serves as an initial starting place for designing Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC)-inspired writing assignments within your courses. Further, we hope that these rubric explanations and setups will be helpful as you determine the best ways to assess your students' writing.

We look forward to continuing this partnership of collaboration and idea-sharing as this Title III grant program's WAC initiative stretches to include other disciplines on campus over the next few years.

Write on!

The Writing Center Team

Emily W. Cosgrove, Ph.D.

Director, Center for Writing and Writing Instruction and Title III Project Director

Elizabeth O. McCormick

Coordinator, The Writing Center

Wallace Campus

Sarah M. Newman, M.S.

Coordinator, The Writing Center

Sparks Campus

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ART APPRECIATION¹

ASSIGNMENT GOAL

Instructors need to consider not only their conceptual learning goals but also the thinking and writing processes that they want their assignments to encourage (Bean, 2011).

EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Observe** _____ (instructor lists several pre-selected works of art). **Write a** _____ (instructor picks the length) **paper in which you** _____ (instructor picks the focus, such as analyzing the piece's theme or how color is used in the work).

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students reinforce a particular term or concept for students to further consider through writing.

2. **Look at** _____ (instructor lists a selected genre of artwork or subject in a painting). **Write a** _____ (instructor picks the length) **reflective essay in which you** _____ (instructor picks the focus of the writing assignment).

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students provide useful insights into students' perceptions of art and its influence in regard to the elements focused on in this assignment.

3. **Consider** _____ (instructor selects a piece of artwork). **Answer the following questions in a** _____ (instructor picks the length) **journal entry.**²

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

General

- What's going on/happening in this picture/poem/etc.?
- What do you see that makes you say that?
- What more can you find?

EXAMPLE QUESTIONS:

Specific

The following questions are based on Jean-Leon Gerome's painting "The Carpet Merchant" (Minneapolis Art Institute):

- What is/was the setting of the painting?

¹ Adapted from Suzanne Donsky, University of St. Thomas.

² Adapted from Bean, John C. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

- What are the roles of the various groups and individual men?
- What can you see in the body language that gives you information about the transaction of the sale?
- Who was the potential buyer? Will he buy the carpet?
- Who was the seller?
- What happened before this scene?
- Who was the person in the shadow? What did he/she do before? What will he/she do next?
- What will happen after this scene?

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students analyze a piece of artwork without the fear of sharing a “wrong” answer aloud with their peers.

PRINCIPLES OF BIOLOGY³

ASSIGNMENT GOAL

Instructors need to utilize writing as a tool to emphasize course content and ideas covered within the classroom (Urquhart, 2005).

EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Write a _____ (instructor picks the length) paper that summarizes the main points or describes what might have confused you in today's biology class meeting.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students engage with the course's content, think through their grasp of the concepts, and consider aspects of the lesson that they did not fully understand.

2. **Write a _____ (instructor picks the length) article review on _____ (the instructor picks the assigned article).**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Teach students writing by example. Reading, summarizing, and critiquing articles also encourages critical thinking skills.

3. **You are a biologist who is studying the effects that shark finning has on the underwater ecosystem. Your supervisor has asked you to write a report on your findings that might be published in the local newspaper.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students become more engaged in content that they can see being useful in real-world situations.

³ Adapted from Urquhart's Teaching Writing in the Content Areas, 2005 edition.

MICROCOMPUTER APPLCIATIONS⁴

ASSIGNMENT GOAL

Instructors need to assign writing assignments that draw on students' real-life and work experiences in order to promote critical thinking (Hilgers, 2012).

EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Write a _____ (instructor picks the length) paper showing how the current program that we are discussing can be used in a career or life situation.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students become more engaged in course content because they can see real-world application possibilities. Also, if students are not sure of real-world application possibilities, instructors can then explain how a particular software is used.

2. **Your employer has asked that you prepare a letter to the customers of your company, Smith City Veterinarian Hospital, informing them of two new updates: that the hospitals' hours are about to change, and an upcoming fundraiser called "Who'd Like Their Dog Washed?" scheduled for July.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students consider ways in which technology can serve as a tool for professional communication.

3. **Brad has just started at your company, and he is unsure on how to send an email using Microsoft Office Outlook. In a step-by-step manner, explain to Brad how to send an email using Microsoft Office Outlook.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students connect Microsoft Outlook to a career situation, thereby providing a practical reason for becoming accustomed to the software.

1. **Search the internet for a job opening and description that sounds interesting to you, and write a cover letter as if you were applying for that particular position. Please utilize Google and other online search engines to also find formatting options and lists of important things to include in this document.**

⁴ Adapted from Hilgers, Thomas L. "As You're Writing, You Have These Epiphanies": What College Students Say About Writing and Learning in Their Majors." within Zawacki's *Writing Across the Curriculum*, 2012 edition.

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS... Students build professionalism and prepare them for the competitive job market.

ENGLISH COMPOSITION⁵

ASSIGNMENT GOAL

Instructors need to consider not only their conceptual learning goals but also the thinking and writing processes that they want their assignments to encourage (Bean, 2011).

EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

- 2. Search the internet for a job opening and description that sounds interesting to you, and write a cover letter as if you were applying for that particular position. Please utilize Google and other online search engines to also find formatting options and lists of important things to include in this document.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students use writing and research skills to create a correctly-formatted cover letter that includes application information for real-world job application processes.

- 3. Write a professional email to your supervisor, Jack Donaghy, in which you notify him that your staff has completed their quarterly budget reports, and that they are ready for his review and signature.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Provide students with the opportunity to practice a practical skill that many of them utilize on a regular basis throughout their careers.

- 4. Write a formal letter of recommendation on behalf of Leslie Knope, a former employee of yours, who is applying for a higher-level nursing position at a nearby hospital.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Give students the opportunity to practice professional correspondence.

⁵ Adapted from Bean, John C. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

HISTORY OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION I & II⁶

ASSIGNMENT GOAL

Instructors need to consider not only their conceptual learning goals but also the thinking and writing processes that they want their assignments to encourage (Bean, 2011).

EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

1. Write a ____ (*instructor picks the length*) **paper that summarizes key concepts or describes what might have been confusing in today's history class meeting.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS ...

Students engage with the course's content, think through their grasp of the concepts, and consider aspects of the lesson that they might not understand fully.

2. Write two ____ (*instructor picks the length*) **papers about** ____ (*instructor picks the historical event*). **The first paper should describe the event from the perspective of** ____ (*instructor picks a participant in the event*); **the second paper should describe the event from the perspective of** ____ (*instructor picks a different participant in the event*).

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students to thinking critically about the way that individual perspectives can shape (or misshape) the telling of history.

1. Write a _____ (*instructor picks the length*) **article review for the article I assigned from the History Reference Center in the Alabama Virtual Library (AVL).**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Encourage students to read outside sources for more information on psychology, as well as provide examples of good writing in the psychology field that can help inform their future writing assignments.

Adapted from Bean, John C. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

INTERMEDIATE COLLEGE ALGEBRA⁷

ASSIGNMENT GOAL

Instructors need to consider not only their conceptual learning goals but also the thinking and writing processes that they want their assignments to encourage (Bean, 2011).

EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Write a ____ (instructor picks the length) paper that focuses on the process of solving a math problem that you assign to the class.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students pay close attention to problem-solving tactics: “The student is asked to describe how he or she used these problem-solving tactics to attack a particular question. Thus, there is always something to write about, regardless of whether or not the student can ‘solve’ the problem. Even a dead end is worthwhile, provided the path to it can be described. Moreover, by paying careful attention to the problem-solving tactics (because they provide a guaranteed source of material for their papers), students can often succeed in doing a lot more mathematics than they think they can” (Bean, p. 117).

2. **Write your own (instructor picks the length) math biography in which you reflect on your experiences in past math classes.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students provide useful insights into the mathematical anxieties and learning problems that students may face (as well as the causes of many of these problems).

3. **You are a math tutor for students at an elementary (or middle/high school). The teacher has asked you to help younger students understand the importance of math by connecting it to real-life situations. Think of three examples where ____ (instructor selects an area that students are learning about in class) is used in everyday life, and write them out as word problems for your students to solve during an upcoming tutoring session.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students reinforce a skill or concept in your classes by asking the students to explain a concept to a novice audience.

⁷ Adapted from Bean, John C. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

MUSIC APPRECIATION⁸

ASSIGNMENT GOAL

Instructors need to consider not only their conceptual learning goals but also the thinking and writing processes that they want their assignments to encourage (Bean, 2011).

EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Write a _____ (instructor picks the length) paper that focuses on how the music you listen to in your car or on your iPod differs from a song from the music genre you are currently studying. Here are a few questions to get you started: What instruments does each use? How do the composers use instruments differently? How do the beat and/or lyrics differ? Explore other differences in the songs to help you see how music has changed over time.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students reinforce the link between course content and the students' personal experiences.

2. **For the next ten minutes, write a summary of today's class discussion (Bean, 132). What information stood out to you? Why? If you zoned out, at what point did you lose interest? Why? You will not be penalized for your response. This assignment is meant to help you recall information and notice what parts of class keep your attention and what do not so you're aware of when you'll need to try extra hard to focus. Another way to tackle this assignment is to write a list of questions that you have about topics you covered in class (Bean, 132).**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students illustrate whether or not they retained the information from the class.

3. **Write a _____ (instructor picks the length) article review for the assigned article on _____ (instructor picks the topic).**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Encourage students to read outside sources for more information on music, as well as observe good examples of music writing practices for future assignments.

4. **Write a dialogue between a famous conductor and his protégé that is influenced by your favorite topic covered in this class (Bean, 118). For example, if your**

⁸ Adapted from Bean, John C. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

favorite chapter is the chapter that discusses melody, have the conductor and his protégé discuss the melody in a piece of music from that genre.

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students creatively analyzed parts of a song by using historical characters to discuss the analysis.

GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY⁹

ASSIGNMENT GOAL

Instructors need to consider not only their conceptual learning goals but also the thinking and writing processes that they want their assignments to encourage (Bean, 2011).

EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

2. Write a _____ (*instructor picks the length*) paper that describes what one concept we are learning about in class looks like in your own life. For example, if we were studying about the developmental stages of infants, you might write about the first time you saw your niece grasp a fork or your son push himself into a standing position. Once you see in your own life what you're learning in class, you'll understand the topic more completely and recall terms more easily.

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students reinforce the link between course content and the students' personal experiences.

3. For the next ten minutes, write a summary of today's class discussion (Bean, 132). What information stood out to you? Why? If you zoned out, at what point did you lose interest? Why? You will not be penalized for your response. This assignment is meant to help you recall information and notice what parts of psychology/our class interest you and what parts do not so that you're aware of when you'll need to try extra hard to focus. Another way to tackle this assignment is to write a list of questions that you have about topics we covered in class (Bean, 132).

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students illustrate whether or not the information from the class is retained.

4. Write a _____ (*instructor picks the length*) article review for the article I assigned from **Psychology Today**.

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Encourage students to read outside sources for more information on psychology, as well as provide examples of good writing in the psychology field that can help inform their future writing assignments.

⁹ Adapted from Bean, John C. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

- 5. Write a dialogue between a psychologist and a patient that is influenced by your favorite topic covered in this class (Bean, 118). For example, if your favorite chapter is the one that covers memory, have the psychologist and the patient discuss a memory from the patient's childhood.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students creatively apply the contents studied in class by writing dialogue between two fictional characters.

FUNDAMENTALS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING¹⁰

ASSIGNMENT GOAL

Instructors need to consider not only their conceptual learning goals but also the thinking and writing processes that they want their assignments to encourage (Bean, 2011).

EXAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Write a _____ (instructor picks the length) paper that explores how one thing you've learned in class about public speaking has impacted you in one or some of the following ways: the way you think about speaking, how you speak yourself, how you think about the way other people speak. When you apply an insight from class to your own life, that insight starts to be more than something to remember for a test; it starts to help you live better.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students reinforce the link between course content and the students' personal experiences.

2. **For the next ten minutes, write a summary of today's class discussion (Bean, 132). What information stood out to you? Why? If you zoned out, at what point did you lose interest? Why? You will not be penalized for your response. This assignment is meant to help you recall information and notice what parts of public speaking/our class interest you and what parts do not so that you're aware of when you'll need to try extra hard to focus. Another way to tackle this assignment is to write a list of questions that you have about topics we covered in class (Bean, 132).**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Students illustrate whether or not they retained information from the class.

3. **Write a _____ (instructor picks the length) article review for the assigned article on _____ (instructor picks the topic).**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Encourage students to read outside sources for more information on speech, as well as provide examples of good writing in the psychology field that can help inform their future writing assignments.

¹⁰ Adapted from Bean, John C. *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2011. Print.

- 4. Write a dialogue between you and your future employer for your dream job (Bean, 118). Once your dialogue is complete, get in a group of three. Two of you will read the dialogue out loud, you as you and one other as the employer. Ask the third person to provide feedback on what sounded natural, what wasn't clear, what information she/he wanted to know more about, etc. to help you understand where you need to be clearer both in your writing skills and speech.**

THIS ASSIGNMENT HELPS...

Provide students with a real-world application for the content studied in speech. It is also a more interactive way of writing and speaking that would be creative and fun for both students and the instructor.

Appendix 1

Developing Rubrics for Writing Assignments¹¹

INTRODUCING RUBRICS

Grading rubrics offer advantages to both students and instructors. By helping to clarify expectations for writing assignments, and the criteria by which those assignments will be assessed, rubrics can strengthen student writing. At the same time, rubrics help instructors grade with greater consistency, and rubrics make it possible for instructors to provide each student with detailed feedback.

Rubrics are generally divided into three categories: analytic rubrics, holistic rubrics, and hybrid rubrics. Holistic rubrics utilize holistic descriptions of varying levels on a writing assignment. These levels of performance often correspond directly to letter grades, though sometimes these levels of performance provide more specificity (i.e., A, -A, + B, B, -B, etc.) or less specificity (i.e., Excellent, Good, Poor).

Analytic rubrics are comprised by discrete categories of assessment. A writing assignment is assigned a grade—usually, a numeric value—for each category. The sum of these grades comprises the final grade for the writing assignment. Hybrid rubrics incorporate elements of both holistic and analytic rubrics. Like analytic rubrics, hybrid rubrics utilize discrete categories of assessment, but while a writing assignment might be assigned a grade for each category, the final grade is not simply comprised by the sum total of those grades.

Each of these three types of rubrics demonstrate strengths and weaknesses. Holistic rubrics are the easiest type of rubric to construct and to use to grade student writing. Analytic rubrics provide students with more detailed feedback, but analytic rubrics take longer to construct and to use. Hybrid rubrics provide the same sort of detailed feedback as analytic rubrics, but the final grade for an assignment is not as closely tied to the rubric. This can prevent instructors and

¹¹ This appendix incorporates ideas from the following sources: *Writing Across the Curriculum: Resources for Writing Instructors Using Writing Activities to Meet the Broad Goals of the First Year Seminar*. Plymouth State University. n.d. Web. 29 July 2014; "Rubrics for Assessment." Faculty Development and Instructional Design Center, Northern Illinois University. n.d. Web 2 September 2014; "Writing Across the Curriculum and in the Disciplines, Rubrics." San Francisco State University. n.d. Web 2 September 2014; Pamela Flash, "Creating Grading Rubrics for Writing Assignments." Center for Writing, University of Minnesota. n.d. Web 4 September 2014.

students from adopting an overly mechanical approach to assessment, but it weakens the connection between assessment and the learning objectives that a rubric is designed to promote.

CONSTRUCTING RUBRICS

The following suggestions focus on the development of analytic or hybrid rubrics. However, many of these suggestions are also applicable to the development of holistic rubrics.

1. Select categories of assessment that match the learning objectives of the assignment. Most rubrics include generic categories such as “Organization,” “Style,” “Content,” “Grammar and Mechanics,” and “Thesis Statement.” It’s often useful to supplement these categories with categories that are specific to the assignment. For example, if an assignment asks students to find and incorporate secondary sources, the rubric for that assignment might include the category “Secondary Sources.” If an assignment asks students to argue against a particular position and to respond to the strongest argument in support of that position, the rubric for that assignment might include the category “Counter Argument.” Most rubrics include between four and eight categories of assessment.
2. Demarcate levels of performance. Most analytic and hybrid rubrics include between three and five levels of performance for each category of assessment. Determine how many levels of performance to include and title each level. A rubric that includes four levels of performance might title the levels “Exemplary,” “Good,” “Acceptable,” and “Unacceptable,” or, in order to avoid negative reinforcement, “Exceptional,” “Strong,” “Capable,” and “Developing.” For analytic rubrics, assign a numeric value or numeric range to each level of performance for each category.
3. Describe each level of performance for each category. Descriptions should be clear and as concrete as possible. Thus, for the level “Acceptable” in the category “Grammar and Mechanics,” the description “Fewer than three major errors (Comma Splice/Run On/Sentence Fragment) and five minor errors” is superior to the description “A few major errors and some minor errors, such as typos, incorrect spellings, and subject-verb agreement.” For the level “Capable” in the category “Counter Argument,” the description “Raises counter argument, but does not develop counter argument before responding to counter argument,” is superior to the

description “Adequate use of counter argument.” Concrete descriptions facilitate clear demarcation between levels of performance.

4. Integrate the rubric into the course. Rubrics support learning objectives for assignments when the criteria that rubrics establish are shared and discussed well before the assignment is due. Some instructors even recommend involving students in the process of constructing a rubric. If an instructor chooses to construct the rubric herself, she can involve students by asking students to use the rubric to grade samples of student writing. This allows the students and the instructor to reach a shared understanding of how the descriptions of each level of assessment for each category will be interpreted and applied to student writing.

Appendix 2

Analytic Rubric Example¹²

Assignment Grading Rubric
TOTAL: /100

Name: _____

	Excellent 15 – 14	Very Good 13 – 12	Good 11 – 9	Developing 8 – 0
Thesis (15%) /15	Thesis is clear and focused; argues a point; offers original analysis; serves as an organizing principle for the entire paper.	Thesis is clear and focused; argues a point; recycles class discussion but offers some original analysis; serves as an organizing principle for most of the paper.	Thesis is clear but unfocused; recycles class discussion; serves as an organizing principle for parts of the paper.	Thesis is unclear and/or unrelated to assignment.
	20 – 18	17 – 16	15 – 12	11 – 0
Course Content Connection (20%) /20	Paper demonstrates mastery of course content; makes numerous/rich connections to course content, terms, and ideas.	Paper demonstrates comprehension of course content; makes several/useful connections to course content, terms, and ideas.	Paper demonstrates engagement with course content; makes a few connections to course content, terms, and ideas.	Paper demonstrates lack of engagement with course content; makes no/strained connections to course content, terms, and ideas.
	25 – 23	22 – 20	19 – 16	15 – 0
Supporting Evidence (25%) /25	Paper supports each claim with compelling evidence; evidence is seamlessly integrated into paper.	Paper supports most claims with relevant evidence; most evidence is integrated into paper.	Paper supports some claims with evidence, but evidence is not always relevant; some evidence is integrated into paper, but some evidence (block quotations, etc.)	Paper includes many unsupported claims; most evidence (block quotations, etc.) disrupts the flow of the paper.

¹² This rubric is adapted from the following sources: *Writing Across the Curriculum: How to Develop a Rubric*. Ohio State Writing Across the Curriculum Resources. 16 Nov 2011. Web. 29 July 2014; *Teaching Your Students Good Writing*. Graduate Teaching Center, Yale University, Advanced Teaching Series. 2011. Web. 16 September 2014.

			disrupts the flow of the paper.	
	15 – 14	13 – 12	11 – 9	8 – 0
Organization and Style (15%) /15	Paragraphs begin with topic sentences that support thesis; smooth transitional sentences connect paragraphs; conclusion moves beyond summary; prose is beautiful and prose is polished and graceful; sentence structure is varied throughout paper.	Paragraphs begin with topic sentences that relate to thesis; transitional sentences connect most paragraphs; conclusion is mostly summary; prose is clear and serviceable; sentence structure is somewhat varied.	Some paragraphs being with topic sentences that relate to thesis; transitional sentences connect some paragraphs; conclusion is strictly summary; prose is coherent; sentence structure is elementary.	Few paragraphs begin with topic sentences that relate to thesis; paragraphs are not connected; conclusion is absent; prose is awkward and, in places, incoherent.
	15 – 14	13 – 12	11 – 9	8 – 0
Grammar and Mechanics (15%) /15	Paper demonstrates almost perfect grammar and mechanics; no more than 1 major error (sentence fragment, run-on sentence, comma splice); no more than 2 minor errors (typos, spelling, subject-verb agreement, punctuation, etc.).	Paper demonstrates competent grammar and mechanics; no more than 2 major errors; no more than 4 minor errors.	Paper demonstrates inconsistent grammar and mechanics; no more than 3 major errors; no more than 5 minor errors.	Paper demonstrates incompetent grammar and mechanics; 4 major errors or more; 6 minor errors or more.
Citations and Works Cited Page (10%) /10	The paper has no citation errors and no errors on the works cited page.	The paper has 1-2 citation errors and no errors on the works cited page.	The paper has 1-2 citation errors and 1-2 errors on works cited page.	The paper has more than 2 citation errors and more than 2 errors on the works cited page.

Additional comment:

Holistic Rubric Example¹³

General Assessment Criteria for (insert course) Assignment

Assignment Name

Exemplary:

In addition to meeting the requirement for an “Accomplished” paper, an “Exemplary” paper consistently models the language and conventions used in the scholarly/professional literature appropriate to the student’s discipline. The paper is essentially error free in terms of mechanics. Writing flows smoothly from one idea to another. Transitions effectively aid the reader in following the writer's logic. The paper raises important issues or ideas, which may not have been represented in the literature cited, and would serve as a good basis for further research on the topic.

Accomplished:

While there may be minor errors, conventions for style and format are used consistently throughout the paper. The paper demonstrates thoroughness and competence in documenting sources; the reader would have little difficulty referring back to cited sources. Style and format contribute to the comprehensibility of the paper. While there may be minor errors, the paper follows normal conventions of spelling and grammar throughout. Transitions and organizational structures are effectively used which help the reader move from one point to another. The paper is interesting and holds the reader's attention. The thesis is carefully focused, and ideas are logically arranged to present a sound argument, though some ideas may be underdeveloped.

Satisfactory:

The style and format are broadly followed, but inconsistencies are apparent. The style may be difficult to follow so as to detract from the comprehensibility of the manuscript. Grammatical conventions are generally used, but inconsistency and/or errors in their use result in weak, but still apparent, connections between topics in the formulation of the argument. The thesis may be overly broad. Ideas closely follow class discussion with little expansion and development of new concepts. Lapses in logic and organization are apparent.

¹³ This rubric is adapted with minor revisions from “Graduate Writing Requirement, Scoring Rubric.” Student Handbook, Master of Science in Biotechnology, California State University, Fresno. n. d. Web. 17 September 2014.

Developing:

While some conventions are followed, others are not. The paper lacks consistency of style and/or format. It may be unclear which references are direct quotes and which are paraphrased. Based on the information provided, the reader would have some difficulty referring back to cited sources. Frequent errors in spelling, grammar (such as subject/verb agreements and tense), sentence structure and/or other writing conventions make reading difficult and interfere with comprehensibility. Writing does not flow smoothly from point to point; appropriate transitions are lacking. The paper is logically and thematically coherent, but is lacking in substantial ways. The thesis is unclear. Major ideas related to the thesis may be ignored or inadequately explored. Overall, the content and organization needs significant revision to represent a critical analysis of the topic.

Appendix 4

Hybrid Rubric Example¹⁴

Written assignments will receive a holistic and analytic grade based on the following

Area	Characteristics – Type of Writer (GRADE)			
	Negligible – Exceptional (A)	Minor – Strong (B)	Intermittent – Capable (C)	Numerous – Developing (D/F)
Directions (10%)	Followed and completed all directions / requirements in detail. Strong evidence of time and effort.	Followed and completed all directions / requirements. One or two minor details are missing.	Followed and completed majority of directions and requirements. Adequate evidence of time and effort.	Partially followed and completed directions and requirements. Little to no evidence of time/effort.
Content and Development (30%)	Paper consistently, clearly, and effectively argues a focused thesis; claims are supported by quotations, examples, and details; writer demonstrates understanding of topic’s complexity and opposing points of view; proposes and responds to several counterarguments.	Paper consistently and clearly argues thesis, but the thesis could be more focused; most claims are supported by quotations, examples, and details; writer demonstrates basic understanding of topic’s complexity and opposing points of view; proposes and responds to at least one counter argument.	Paper inconsistently argues thesis; thesis is unfocused; some claims are supported by quotations, examples, and details; writer demonstrates incomplete understanding of topic’s complexity and opposing points of view; proposes but does not respond to counter arguments.	Paper does not argue a thesis; few claims are supported by quotations, examples, and details; writer demonstrates no understanding of topic’s complexity and opposing points of view; fails to propose and respond to counter arguments.

¹⁴This rubric is adapted from the following sources: *Writing Across the Curriculum: How to Develop a Rubric*. Ohio State Writing Across the Curriculum Resources. 16 Nov 2011. Web. 29 July 2014; *Teaching Your Students Good Writing*. Graduate Teaching Center, Yale University, Advanced Teaching Series. 2011. Web. 16 September 2014.

Organization (30%)	<p>Introduction establishes context and purpose; paragraphs are controlled by topic sentences and connected with smooth transitions; paper moves logically toward conclusion, which moves beyond the introduction by discussing application, implications, and/or significance.</p>	<p>Introduction establishes context and purpose; most paragraphs are controlled by topic sentences and most paragraphs are connected with smooth transitions; with the exception of one or two detours, paper moves logically toward conclusion, which attempts to move beyond the introduction.</p>	<p>Introduction only partially establishes context and purpose; some paragraphs are controlled by topic sentences, and some paragraphs are connected with smooth transitions; paper does not move logically toward conclusion, and conclusion simply restates introduction.</p>	<p>Introduction does not establish context and purpose; few paragraphs are controlled by topic sentences, and few paragraphs are connected with smooth transitions; paper lacks identifiable conclusion.</p>
Writing Style and Conventions (30%)	<p>Paper demonstrates economy and eloquence in phrasing, a sense of rhythm, a variation of sentence structure, subtle diction, negligible errors in spelling or grammar.</p>	<p>Paper demonstrates generally correct language; some cliché, some lack of precision, some lack of eloquence; a few grammar or spelling errors; perhaps monotonous or slightly verbose.</p>	<p>Errors in grammar, poor word choice, poorly proofread; little variety in sentence structure; verbose; monotonous.</p>	<p>Egregiously sloppy; numerous spelling and grammar errors; not proofread; rambling.</p>