

Grading Standards in Freshman Composition

Superior (A-B)

Content: A clearly defined central idea that is supported with concrete, adequate and relevant detail.

Organization: The piece of writing progresses by clearly ordered, logically connected stages to a conclusion. The writer chooses appropriate organizational strategies and appropriate emphasis in his or her use of support.

Paragraphs: The writer's paragraphs should be unified and coherent. The writer's transitions between paragraphs should be clear, interesting and varied.

Sentences: The writer's sentences should be grammatical and effectively varied. The writer should use coordination and subordination intelligently.

Diction: The writer's choice of tone and voice should be appropriate to the subject and to the audience. The writer's use of words should be precise, economical, and idiomatic.

Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling: The effectiveness and clarity of the writer's work should be promoted by consistent use of standard grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Average (C)

Content: The writer's central idea is too general or it may be supported with detail that is occasionally repetitious, irrelevant, or too general.

Organization: The writer's organizational strategy may be clear, but the piece of writing sometimes drifts into digressions or points of inappropriate emphasis. The stages of the piece of writing are not always logically related to each other.

Paragraphs: The writer's paragraphs are generally unified and coherent, but some may lack a clear central focus. The writer's transitions are either clear but mechanical and abrupt, or some paragraphs may not be clearly related to each other.

Sentences: The writer's sentences are generally correct, but they are monotonous, lacking variety or effective use of coordination and subordination.

Diction: The writer's diction is generally precise and clear, but the writer has not adjusted the tone and voice to his or her subject and audience.

Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling: The effectiveness and clarity of the writer's work is weakened by occasional deviations from standard grammar, punctuation, and spelling.

Unacceptable (D-F)

Content: The writer does not seem to have settled on a clear central idea. The writer has not supported his or her central idea with concrete, relevant detail.

Organization: There is no clear organizational strategy in the writer's work. The piece of writing is distinguished by irrelevancy and redundancy.

Paragraphs: The writer's paragraphs are incoherent, having no central idea and no adequate development. The transitions between the paragraphs are either lacking or ineffective.

Sentences: The writer does not appear to know the boundaries of the sentence or how to subordinate or coordinate material within the sentence effectively.

Diction: The writer's diction is vague or inappropriate. The writer seems not to have considered the issue of tone and voice with reference to his or her audience.

Grammar, Punctuation, and Spelling: Consistent deviations from standard grammar, punctuation, and spelling so as to obscure the writer's ideas and intent.