

COMMUNICATION: WRITING OUTCOME

OUTCOME STATEMENT: Students who graduate from Surry Community College should be able to produce writing that is clear, precise, organized, incisive, and correct (according to the guidelines of Standard Written English) for a variety of purposes and audiences.

To be more specific, students who graduate from SCC should be able to produce writing that is clear, accurate, precise, relevant, deep, broad, logical, meaningful, fair, and correct for a variety of purposes and audiences.

RUBRIC: This rubric uses a four-point scale. SCC has stated that it wants its students to be “exemplary” or “satisfactory” writers.

Exemplary: 4 = All the applicable standards are skillfully demonstrated; the writing is particularly marked by excellence in depth, insight, and expression

Satisfactory: 3 = Most of the applicable standards are competently and effectively demonstrated, but the writing lacks the exemplary depth and insight of a 4

Below Satisfactory: 2 = Some of the applicable standards are demonstrated, but there is a lack of consistent competence; writing is marked by mixed thinking and ineffective expression

Unsatisfactory: 1 = A few of the applicable standards are demonstrated, but poorly; writing is marked by a low level of reasoning and expression

TEN WRITING STANDARDS: These writing standards can be used to measure student writing.

Clear: understandable, concise

Do you know exactly what the writer means or could there be several ways to interpret the paper/paragraph/sentence? Does the writer need to refine word choice, add examples, or elaborate to clarify ideas?

Accurate: free of errors or distortions

Does the content conform to fact? Can the statements be verified or tested? Does the writer attempt to verify/test statements for the reader?

Precise: specific, exact to the necessary level of detail

Is the writing specific and focused? Is the wording exact?

Relevant: clearly connected to the matter at hand

Is all the information relevant to the paper’s thesis and purpose? Does every paragraph, every sentence, example, etc., clearly connect to the paper’s focus and purpose? Is there any extraneous discussion?

Deep: intellectually complex, open to multiple interrelationships and complexities

Has the writer addressed the complexities of the topic? Has the writer acknowledged related difficulties and dealt with them reasonably? Has the writer tried to get at the key issue? Has the writer oversimplified a complex situation, issue, problem, or question?

Broad: open to multiple relevant viewpoints (while still being focused)

Has the writer examined all the relevant concepts, issues, and perspectives? Has the writer accounted for/justified any necessary narrowing?

Logical: combining thoughts that are mutually supporting and that make sense in combination; free of contradictions and fallacies

Do the paper's conclusions follow logically from its points? Do the points follow logically from the evidence? Does the first paragraph fit in with the last? Does it all make sense together? Is there a logical chain of reasons to support the point? Are there gaps in the reasoning? Are there fallacies?

Significant: notable, thoughtful, focused on the most important information & ideas

Has the writer considered the most important points, problems, questions, etc.? Is discussion absent that ought to be included? Does the writer address the prompt (if a prompt is given)? If the writer has addressed the prompt and is allowed or asked to choose a focus, is that focus meaningful?

Fair: not merely self-serving or one-sided; consistent with ethics

Does the writer sympathetically or fairly present the views of others? If the assignment calls for sources, has the writer acknowledged those sources clearly and fully and delineated between borrowed and original ideas? Does the writer ignore other perspectives? Does the writer rely on his/her biases to the exclusion of other viewpoints?

Correct: free from errors in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and usage; appropriate and effective in style, tone, and vocabulary; consistent in following requirements

Are grammar, punctuation, spelling, and usage correct? (Do those features conform to the rules of Standard Written English—and if they do not, have the rules been broken for effective reasons?) Are vocabulary, tone, and style effective and appropriate for the chosen purpose and audience? Does the writing follow the expected requirements?

(All but the last criterion are adapted from Richard Paul and Linda Elder's "Intellectual Standards," *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools*, pp.7-9. Paul and Elder's questions have been modified and expanded to make them more appropriate for evaluating student writing.)

POSSIBLE ASSIGNMENTS: Writing assignments that provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate the writing standards outlined in this rubric and that are applicable across the curriculum include the following:

Research papers/projects (synthesis papers)

Formal speeches (requiring text)

Essays (personal, descriptive to argumentative, literary)

Proposals

Case studies

Problem analyses

Reports

Reviews/critiques/evaluations

Letters

Memos

Summaries/paraphrases

Response/reflection papers

Detailed PowerPoint presentations

Dialogues

Compare/contrast papers

How-to/process papers

Classification papers

Cause/effect papers

Extended definitions

Editorials

Analyses