

## Reading Rubric

### *Introduction*

In order to gauge the effectiveness of my course intervention, I needed a measurement instrument. Since my goal is to help students produce writing that is rhetorically sophisticated, precisely argued, well-researched, urgent, and timely, I need a relatively precise description of what that kind of writing looks like.

I developed this rubric using a grounded theory open coding approach. First, I re-read several projects from five students in the baseline iteration of the course (spring 2015). In the margins, I noted both "positive indicators" and "opportunities for growth," highlighting and annotating sections of student text to describe its features. I then grouped my comments into six categories: Occasion, Kairos, or "So What?"; Purpose & Argument; Use of Sources & Research; Reflection, Curiosity, & Metacognition; Prose, Language, & Style; Design, Formatting, & Organization Conventions. Finally, I rewrote my annotations into descriptors and arranged them into loose levels of progress, using the categories "Beginner," "Apprentice," "Journeyman," and "Master."

Because it developed out of an inductive close reading of student work, my hope is that this rubric describes what I care about as a writing teacher. My hope is that this rubric, along with close reading of selected pieces of student work, will allow me to gauge the effectiveness of my intervention in improving student writing.

### *Instructions for Use*

This rubric is designed to depict the qualities of student writing by describing key indicators of writing achievement. To use this rubric to "score" a piece of student writing, simply mark each box that describes the given text.

In a given row, multiple boxes might be checked. For instance, a student might feature a title, logically arranged paragraphs, and appropriate documentation, in which case, check "Beginner," "Apprentice," *and* "Journeyman" in the "Design, Formatting, & Organizational Conventions" category.

To assist with the interpretive close reading of student work, identify *how* and *where* the piece of student writing meets each indicator. For instance, if a student has identified counterarguments (indicative of "Journeyman" level in "Purpose & Argument"), the scorer might mark the page and paragraph in which the student does so, or list phrases indicative of this achievement.

Note that all of these categories may not apply to every writing assignment, and that students might score "out of order" in the rubric, e.g., achieving "Journeyman" but not "Apprentice" in a given category.

<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>Master</b>	<b>Journeyman</b>	<b>Apprentice</b>	<b>Beginner</b>
<b>Occasion, Kairos, or "So What?"</b>	The writer explains why or how the subject is relevant to multiple audiences.	The writer pinpoints why her perspective matters at this moment in time.	The writer identifies or invokes an audience to whom the subject matters.	The project addresses, implicitly or explicitly, why the subject matters to the writer.
<b>Purpose &amp; Argument</b>	The project explicitly addresses the warrants, reasoning, and assumptions of both the writer's own position and the arguments of others.	The writer identifies counterarguments or alternate perspectives, and uses explicit reasoning to connect supporting evidence to claims.	The writer uses extended examples and patterns of evidence to support claims.	The project is focused around a central position or major claim.
<b>Use of Sources &amp; Research</b>	The project includes primary, original, or new research.	The writer treats sources critically (e.g., contextualizing a source, critiquing a source's methodology, comparing and contrasting sources, etc.).	The writer uses sources via paraphrase or summary.	The project quotes credible outside sources, and identifies those sources as required by the assignment or by genre conventions.
<b>Reflection, Curiosity, &amp; Metacognition</b>	The writer explicitly gauges the success of her project, or describes the conditions under which her project can be said to be successful or effective.	The project has a pattern of meta-commentary within the text itself (e.g., footnotes, transitions, introductory note, etc.).	The project includes explicit reflection on the writer's curiosity in the subject.	The project provides implicit evidence of the writer's curiosity in the subject.
<b>Prose, Language, &amp; Style</b>	The writer possesses a unique sense of style or voice that is appropriate to the goals of the piece.	The style (syntax, diction, and tone) is textured and complex, given the aims and limitations of the project.	Syntactical style is consistent, given the aims and limitations of the project.	Diction, punctuation, and syntax are essentially standard.
<b>Design, Formatting, &amp; Organization Conventions</b>	The overall organizational pattern is sophisticated, inventive, and effective in achieving the writers' aims.	The project uses appropriate documentation conventions (e.g., MLA citations in an academic paper, journalistic source identification in a general interest article, etc.).	The topic or purpose of each paragraph is clear, and the arrangement of paragraphs is logical.	The project has a title and an opening or introduction that outlines the subject matter.