

The Write Course Handbook

A Guide to Effective Academic Writing



Erskine College Quality Enhancement Plan

2015-2016

Erskine College Mission Statements

Institutional Mission Statement

Erskine College exists to glorify God as a Christian academic community where students are equipped to flourish as whole persons for lives of service through the pursuit of undergraduate liberal arts and graduate theological education.

College Mission (Undergraduate Programs)

The mission of Erskine College is to equip students to flourish by providing an excellent liberal arts education in a Christ-centered environment where learning and biblical truth are integrated to develop the whole person.

Seminary Mission (Graduate Programs)

The mission of Erskine Theological Seminary is to educate persons for service in the Christian Church.

Course Description

WC 201. The Write Course (3 s.h.)

Prerequisite: EN 102. Development of academic writing skills through study of critical issues within the various disciplines. The writing included in the course will emphasize basic rhetorical patterns and advanced critical analysis of those issues.

Table of Contents

The QEP at Erskine College: How We Got Here	1
Academic Honesty and Plagiarism	3
Writing Basics	5
Organization	5
Development	6
Voice	6
Mechanics/Conventions	7
Transitions	8
Write Here Center Hours of Operation	8
Rhetorical Patterns	10
Illustration/Description	10
Process Analysis	10
Definition	11
Argument	12
Grading	15
Grading Scale	15
Common Writing Assessment Rubric – The Write Course (WC 201)	16
Rubric Explanation	17
Documentation	19
Locating Sources	19
Citing Sources	19
Using Quotations	20
Paraphrasing	20
Summarizing	20
Using Source Materials	20

Common Mechanics and Usage Errors	22
Sentences	22
Fragments	22
Run-ons	22
Comma Splices	23
Punctuation	23
Commas	23
Comma Splices Review	25
Semicolons	25
Apostrophes	25
Quotation Marks	26
Italics/Underlining	27
Agreement	27
Subject/Verb	27
Pronoun Antecedent	28
Usage	28
Active v. Passive Voice	28
Appendixes	29
Writing Assessment Rubric (EN 102)	30
Sample Peer Revision Evaluation Form	31

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) at Erskine College

Phase I: Review of Erskine College General Education Curriculum

- March 2009
- Core Curriculum Review Committee found that revising general education curriculum “too big for a successful QEP.”
 - Faculty Interviews revealed the following:
 - “Common dissatisfaction” with Erskine Seminar (ES 101)
 - Ten of thirteen departmental interviews expressed concern about EC 101, **student writing** in general, or student critical thinking skills.

Phase II: Specifically Identified and Developed QEP

- May 2010
- First QEP Committee was appointed
- August 2010
- Faculty Forum – The following topics (related to writing) were presented for consideration:
 - Enhancing **writing** and critical thinking skills
 - Enhancing students’ use of **writing** as a means of clarifying thinking
 - “Enhanced learning groups” to develop **writing**, critical thinking, and global awareness

November 2010- Faculty Survey Results

- “How important do you think **writing skills** are for Erskine students?”
 - 89.3% indicated “very important” (26/31 respondents)
- “How well do you think the Erskine faculty does at **providing opportunities for improving writing skills** of Erskine students?”
 - 66.7% indicated “average” (20/30)
 - 10% indicated “poor” (3/30)
- “How confident are you in your **students’ writing skills** at the...
 - freshman level?” 63% indicated “not at all”
 - sophomore level?” 30% indicated “not at all”

- February 2011
- Faculty Forum – “Rather than eliminate the Erskine Seminar altogether, faculty now indicated a greater desire to revise and improve the course”
(*Charting the Write Course: Piloting the Issues through Writing*).

- April 2011
- English Department Proposal
 - EN 102 as “**foundational writing course**”
 - Reduce class size to 12-15 students. (Increases number of sections taught by English Department faculty. Fifty percent of the teaching load in English is devoted to freshman composition. Each English professor

usually teaches two sections of freshman composition, one sophomore survey of literature, and one upper level course.)

- Only English Department faculty will teach EN 102, while “non-English faculty” will teach Erskine Seminar.

April 2011	- QEP Proposal to Faculty
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Majority of faculty chose a writing course without a specific topic” (<i>Charting the Write Course: Piloting the Issues through Writing</i>). • Sophomore placement of the new writing course • New writing course taught by all departments • “The majority of the faculty chose the fall semester sophomore writing course” (<i>Charting the Write Course: Piloting the Issues through Writing</i>).
October 2011	- Faculty Survey Results
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Do you favor a sophomore writing seminar focused on contemporary issues within your discipline?” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 11.5% indicated “strongly disagree” (3/26 respondents) ○ 15.4% indicated “no opinion” (4/26) ○ 3.8% indicated “somewhat agree” (1/26) ○ 46.2% indicated “agree” (12/26) ○ 23.1% indicated “strongly agree” (6/26) ○ Summary: 73.1% (19/26) of faculty favored sophomore-level writing course
March 2012	- SACS On-Site Visit
Spring 2012	- SACS Comments for Strengthening the QEP: 1) Make learning outcomes more defined, manageable. 2) Put into place “appropriate and sufficient” assessment measures. 3) Hire a writing director.
February 2013	- QEP Committee Proposal of The Write Course approved by the Curriculum Committee
March 2013	- Curriculum Committee Proposal of The Write Course Approved by Faculty
September 2013	- First sections of The Write Course taught
May 2014	- First full year of The Write Course at Erskine College
June 2014	- Assessment of first year of The Write Course
May/June 2015	- Assessment of the second year of The Write Course

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Erskine College Honor Code

We, the members of this academic community, Erskine College, stand for the search for truth, the fair and respectful treatment of others, and the recognition of honest originality in academic pursuits.

Since its founding in 1839, Erskine has upheld the code of honor within its motto, *Scientia cum moribusconjuncta*, as the moral cornerstone of the Erskine education, shaping individual character for service to God and others.

By entering the Erskine academic community, a new student or faculty member joins this long tradition, accepts and embraces the College's mission, its educational processes, and the policies which undergird them. Every individual has the responsibility to maintain the highest standards of personal honor and integrity in academic relationships, understanding that maintaining these standards will benefit the individual as well as the community. The Erskine community flourishes only when every member—students, faculty, staff, administration, and alumni—upholds the precepts embodied in this code, as adopted by the faculty and Student Government Association of Erskine College.

I. Dishonorable Conduct Undermining the Academic Community

- A. Lying--knowingly and willingly giving false information, written or oral
- B. Cheating--subverting the scholarly rules and expectations set by the professor
- C. Stealing--taking something that belongs to someone else
- D. Plagiarism--taking someone else's work and presenting it as one's own

II. Principles Supporting the Academic Community

- A. The academic community recognizes that the professor establishes the scholarly rules for the class, while recognizing that the details of rules may vary from course to course and discipline to discipline.
- B. The academic community recognizes that collaboration occurs in and out of class, but accepts that the professor has the right to establish limits to collaboration.
- C. The academic community acknowledges the use of computers and other technology for scholarly work and believes that the rules governing honorable conduct extend to, and should prevail in, the digital world.
- D. The academic community affirms that ignorance of the rules of academia is no excuse.

III. Responsibilities of the Students

- A. Students are responsible for their own behavior in light of standards set by their professors and to seek clarification when unsure of faculty expectations related to academic integrity.
- B. Students report suspected violations to the appropriate faculty members or to the academic dean.
- C. Students handle all suspected violations with confidentiality.

D. Reporting students have the right to remain anonymous.

IV. Responsibilities of the Faculty

A. Faculty members clearly communicate standards for behavior in regard to the Honor Code, including expectations related to computers and hand-held devices.

B. Faculty members convey limits to collaboration.

C. Faculty members report all violations of the Honor Code to the academic dean.

Writing Basics

Becoming an effective writer does not have to be one of those dreadful chores left to students and academics. In fact, many people who make their living as writers will admit that they did not really know that much about writing before they experienced success. How did they do it? The first and last word writers need to learn is simple: Practice. No, practice does not always make perfect, especially if you're practicing the wrong thing, but once you learn some of the essential basics of academic writing, taking the time to practice and sharpen your skills as a writer will pay off.

The following section covers the basics of effective writing. The terminology should be familiar, for most of us heard it in high school. At the college level, the time to hone your craft has come. Writing leads to learning. Your writing shows your professors what you have learned and how you respond critically to certain subjects. Let's get started.

Organization

Effective academic writing is well organized writing. Effective writers create a **thesis** (main idea or claim) and develop that thesis through support (how, where, why, when, whom, what). The **introduction** of an essay literally introduces the reader to the main idea, provides some initial support for that main idea, and allows the reader to begin to draw initial conclusions about the direction the writer's argument will take.

The introduction will be more effective if the writer begins with what is called a **hook** or an **attention-grabber**. A **hook** better captures the reader's attention and piques the reader's interest, thus creating the possibility that the reader will find the writing more effective. Interest on the part of the reader better ensures more effective communication between the writer and the reader. The **hook** usually relates a story, provides an attention-grabbing statistic or fact, or offers an example in order to begin to access the reader's prior knowledge about the forthcoming main idea.

The development of individual topics of support occurs in the **body** of the paper. Each body paragraph provides complete support for the **thesis** in a linear, easy-to-understand fashion. Effective support of a main idea will be multiple paragraphs. The **body** of the paper will be stronger and more effective if you use facts, statistics, data, or examples to strengthen your argument.

The **conclusion** makes up the final piece of the organizational puzzle of your academic writing. A **conclusion** does indeed bring the writing to its end, but its sole purpose is not necessarily to say "goodbye." A **conclusion's** primary purpose should be to provide the reader with a recap of the information while prompting that reader to actually draw a **conclusion** about what he or she just read. **(Part I, Chapters 1-3 of *The Bedford Handbook*, specifically addresses basic writing issues.)**

An effective essay can be organized in the following manner:

- **Hook Statement** – grabs the reader’s attention (The **hook** can range from one sentence to multiple paragraphs. Check with your professor about his or her preferences with respect to your use of a **hook**.)
- **Introduction – thesis** (main idea/claim) with initial support
- **Body** – supports **thesis**

Writer’s primary point to support the **thesis**

+

Evidence (proof) from reliable primary or secondary source

+

Writer’s analysis of the evidence (cited material) as it relates to supporting the **thesis**

- **Conclusion** – closes paper, restates the **thesis**, and prompts further thought

Development

Writers often experience difficulty **developing** their main ideas (**thesis** statements) after they move away from the introduction. **Development** of a central idea means that the writer provides adequate evidence and support for that main idea. While **developing** an effective central idea can be challenging, it is not impossible. Here follow some hints that may help you make your writing more effective:

- **Prewrite** before actually starting to write. This process is often overlooked as time-consuming or wasted time, but creating a precise plan for how to develop the main idea is important before starting to write.
- **Make a list** of all the relevant details concerning the topic. Ask questions that begin with the following: *how, where, why, when, who/whom, what*.
- **Anticipate the reader’s questions**. Write enough about a supporting detail so that the reader is not left with any unanswered questions.
- **Provide enough detail** so that the topic is completely covered. Don’t skimp on support. Be thorough. Use facts, statistics, data, or examples to strengthen your argument.
- **Use strong support**. Make sure that the details used to support the main idea (**thesis**) actually do provide support; avoid ambiguous details that leave the reader confused or lost.

- **Stay focused** on that central idea (**thesis**). Stop periodically and assess your details to ensure that what you're writing does support your thesis.

Voice

Voice is essentially the way in which you present yourself through writing. Your **voice** is presented through the type of *information* you use for support, the *role* you choose to play in relation to the reader, and the *tone* you use to convey that information.

The **information** you employ to support the central idea plays a crucial role in how you are perceived by the reader. This **information** essentially consists of details, facts, statistics, data, examples, and support material you use. Readers will make a judgment concerning their reaction to your writing based on the reliability of the **information** you use as support.

Most writers are aware of the **role** they want to assume in a particular piece of writing. In other words, writers already know how they want their readers to perceive them. While the **roles** a writer may assume are varied (academic scholar, story-teller, reporter, inspirer, informer, persuader), writers need to be aware of the reader's expectations and plan their roles accordingly.

Within the area of voice, **tone** is the easiest of the three to master. Remember when your mother said, "Don't take that *tone* with me"? She was referring not to *what* you said, but more specifically to *how* you said it. **Tone** in writing works the same way. Your **tone** may be formal or informal, depending on the subject matter. Your **tone** could be serious or funny; your tone might be light-hearted or sarcastic. Remaining aware of your **tone** helps you avoid alienating or confusing your reader; maintaining a consistent and effective tone also helps you keep your reader interested.

Here are some ways to ensure that your **tone** remains effective:

- Use precise vocabulary to fit your objective(s).
- Use vocabulary that is appropriate to the topic.
- Vary your sentences structure; avoid phrasing that is obvious or relies too heavily on cliché.
- Remain aware of your audience and your objective.

Mechanics/Conventions

Unfortunately, most writers fall into one of two categories with respect to this area: writers whose lack of mechanical fluency hinders otherwise effective writing or writers who focus so heavily on making sure every aspect of their writing is mechanically perfect that they lose a sense of readability. While specific mechanical issues are covered in this handbook, you will not gain a firm grasp of this issue until you actively seek to identify your individual weaknesses and work to overcome them. The bottom line remains the same: **Your readers**

cannot understand your thought process or your ideas concerning a certain subject if they cannot get past the awkward mechanical issues that hinder your writing's impact.

When they refer to mechanical issues in your writing, most professors mean errors with **capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure**. When problems are present in these four areas, the effectiveness of your writing suffers.

Here are some suggestions for making your writing more mechanically correct:

- **Have someone proofread your work.** This often overlooked step can significantly improve your writing because another set of eyes can usually find problems we overlook in our own writing. **Erskine College's Write Here Center is staffed Monday through Thursday evenings between the hours of 7 P.M. and 11 P.M., on Sunday evenings from 9 P.M. and 11 P.M., and on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3 P.M. until 5 P.M., and the competent student workers there can help you see improvement in your writing.**
- **Commit to memory some basic rules** regarding **capitalization, spelling, punctuation, and sentence structure**. Start off slowly with one or two rules that you know will help clean up your writing and make that writing more effective.
- **Ask questions about the rules.** Begin to formulate in your own mind how and why certain rules exist.
- **Purchase and use (key word is use) a good handbook** like *The Bedford Handbook*. That handbook is not doing you any good lying on your desk or crammed into the bottom of your bag. Take it out and use it when you write. Be curious. Find the answers for yourself.
- **Be a reader.** Readers begin to unconsciously pay attention to mechanical patterns, and over time they begin to employ effective patterns in their own writing.

Transitions

The most effective tools you have to link one thought or one paragraph to another thought or thought are *transitions*. *Transition* words provide connections so that your thoughts don't fall apart or come across as random or haphazard. Here are some effective *transitions*.

To describe position or direction: across, around, close, down, far, farther, here, in between, in front of, near, nearby, outside, over, there, toward, up, upward, within, without

To tell a story (time): at the same time, during, frequently, in (2014, the middle of) meanwhile, never, now, occasionally, often, seldom, soon, then, until, when, whenever, while

To provide examples: for example, for instance, in fact, namely, specifically

To compare or contrast: also, although, as, but, even though, however, in comparison, like, likewise, on the contrary, on the other hand, similarly

To examine cause and effect: as a result, because, because of, consequently, so, then

To show continuation or to summarize: after, also, before, earlier, finally, furthermore, in addition, in the end, consequently, last, later, next, so, therefore, thus

Rhetorical Patterns

Rhetoric is the study of language in its practical uses with a focus on the effects of language (especially persuasion/argumentation) and the means by which a writer can achieve these effects on readers. In short, knowledge of **rhetoric** allows the writer to better understand which techniques or strategies to use when writing with a specific purpose in mind.

The four rhetorical patterns covered in The Write Course (WC 201) are as follows:

- Illustration/Description
- Process Analysis
- Definition
- Argument/Research

Illustration/Description

Illustration or **Descriptive** writing appeals most directly to the reader's senses by *showing* the physical characteristics of a subject. By appealing to the reader's senses, this type of writing asks how does something *sound, smell, feel, taste, or appearance*. **Descriptive** writing is useful in making an *abstract* subject more *concrete*, while focusing on presenting a "picture" of something.

Here are some ways to get started writing an **Illustration** or **Descriptive** essay:

- Identify what is to be described.
- Ask yourself how the subject of your writing affects the five senses. Are some senses affected more than others? How are they affected? Why are they affected?
- What are the subject's traits on which you will focus?
- What is the function of the subject to be described?
- How do people already relate to the subject you intend to describe? How can you activate their prior knowledge on the subject?
- What *verbs* and *adjectives* can be used to best describe your subject?
- Consider your audience and your purpose.

Process Analysis

Process Analysis explains *how*. This type of writing breaks a particular process into a *sequence* of actions that leads to an *end result*. There are two types of **Process Analysis**: *directive process analysis* and *explanatory process analysis*. *Directive process analysis* explains

the process of how to make or do something. *Explanatory process analysis* details how something works.

Here are some ways to get started writing a **Process Analysis** essay:

- Identify **process** to analyze.
 - Select a **process** that is familiar to you.
 - Select a **process** that you find interesting.
- Identify important steps in that **process**
- Put those steps in order.
- Use appropriate transitions: *next, from there, then, usually, in some cases, never, rarely.*
- Use appropriate point of view: *third person* (he, she, it - when referring to the **process**) and *second person* (you - when telling reader the steps in the process).
- Be careful not to omit steps in the **process** that are so familiar to you that you take them for granted.
- Consider audience and purpose.

Definition

A **Definition** paper is pretty simple: It's *defining* something – telling what something is. A **Definition** paper can also be approached from a different angle: You might want to identify what something *is not*. Both are effective methods of presenting information in this rhetorical pattern.

Here are some examples of the formula for setting up this type of writing:

Thing to be defined + *general class* + **distinguishing characteristics**

- Happiness is a **warm puppy**. – Charles M. Schulz
- Hope is a **thing with feathers**. – Emily Dickinson
- Golf is a **good walk spoiled**. – Mark Twain

Here are some ways to get started writing a **Definition** paper:

- Identify the subject. Cat
- Assign a *general class*. *Animal*

- Distinguishing **characteristics** **Temperamental**
- Revise statement as necessary. Cats are **temperamental animals**.
- State your main point about the subject. What is your purpose for defining this particular subject?
- Introduce other distinguishing characteristics. Appeal to reader's interest.
- Use helpful synonyms and examples. Are there other words or terms by which this subject is known?
- Consider audience and purpose.

Argument

Argument is the strategic use of language to convince an audience to agree with you about an issue or to change their attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors to a way that you think is right. An effective **argument** will encourage your audience to at least *hear your argument*, even if they disagree with you. While you might think that an appeal to emotion is the best way to achieve an effective argument, the most effective means of arguing a point is to rely on evidence (proof): facts, data, statistics, examples, and reason. Use your emotional appeal in your introduction as way to grab the reader's attention (the **hook**). After that, let your emphasis be on supporting your **argument** with reliable facts, data, statistics, and reason.

Here are some ways to get started putting together an effective **Argument**:

- You must be able to support your position.
- Consider your audience. Different audiences require different strategies.
- Understand that an effective **argument** appeals to the audience in several ways:
 - a) their sense of reason (Is your **argument** logical?)
 - b) their emotions (Is there a *hook* in your introduction?)
 - c) their sense of ethics (Does your **argument** support their sense of fairness?)
 - d) their sense of morality (Does your **argument** support their sense of right and wrong?)
- Consider purpose; in this case, your purpose is to convince. While you may include *description, definition, process analysis, cause and effect, or compare and contrast*, your objective is to create a convincing **argument** based on strong support.

- Take a position and support that position.
- Develop a claim (a debatable **thesis** statement).
- Support your claim with evidence.
- Evidence may be any of the following: *facts, statistics, data, examples, expert testimony, or personal experience*.
- Your evidence must support your claim, it must make sense to your audience, and it must be reasonable and logical.
- Narrow your claim. Don't use broad, sweeping statements that are too easily debatable.
- Employ logical, linear reasoning.
- Avoid faulty logic.
- Appeal to the audience's emotions only as a way to introduce your topic (**hook**) or to support your evidence.
- Establish credibility by being aware of your *tone*. Don't condescend or take a "holier-than-thou" attitude.
- Anticipate and acknowledge counterarguments.

The Arguable Thesis Statement

Anyone can write a simple **thesis** or main idea statement. For an argument paper, your **thesis** needs to be more developed, more complete. An effective **thesis** statement sets the tone for the whole paper. It provides enough information so that the reader has a clear understanding of your argument and your intentions for supporting your argument.

Many writers think that a statement of intent (*In this essay I will argue for more gun control legislation.*) and simple questions (*Do you think our country needs more gun control?*) serve as effective **thesis** statements. They do not. These types of general, broad statements or questions inform the reader of the paper's main idea, but they do not clearly indicate the writer's position or opinion. Such statements are simple, weak, and do not clarify the writer's primary focus of the argument.

An arguable **thesis** or claim is one that is debatable. *People die because of gun violence* is not an arguable statement; therefore, such a "claim" really is not a claim at all. It is a simple statement of fact. A statement of fact does not set up an effective argument essay. To effectively argue a claim, you will need to craft an arguable **thesis** statement.

The Steps to an Effective Argumentative Thesis:

1) State your main idea.

Stricter gun control legislation is needed in this country.

2) Add a “because” statement to clarify your position on the subject.

Because gun violence threatens our individual freedoms

3) Acknowledge a primary counterargument to your claim.

even though the Second Amendment to the Constitution guarantees individuals’ right to bear arms.

- For this step, employ a reliable *conjunctive adverb* that shows comparison or contrast (however, instead, nevertheless, nonetheless, otherwise, rather, moreover), a *subordinating conjunction* that begins an adverb clause (although, provided that, since, so that, though, unless, while), or a *transitional expression* that shows comparison or contrast (likewise, similarly, but at the same time, and yet, despite, even though, on the contrary, on the other hand, regardless) to set up the counterargument you acknowledge. Consult *The Bedford Handbook* to learn more.

4) Clean up or revise as necessary.

Despite the fact that the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution ensures Americans’ right to bear arms, stricter gun control legislation is needed because gun violence threatens the very freedoms gun ownership was intended to protect.

Grading

Grading Scale

The Write Course at Erskine College uses the following grading scale.

A = 93-100

A- = 90-92

B+ = 87-89

B = 83-86

B- = 80-82

C+ = 77-79

C = 73-76

C- = 70-72

D+ = 67-69

D = 60-66

F = 59 or below

Common Writing Assessment Rubric (WC 201 – The Write Course)

GRADE	RHETORICAL KNOWLEDGE	CRITICAL RESPONSE	WRITING AS A PROCESS	KNOWLEDGE OF CONVENTIONS	COMPOSING IN ELECTRONIC ENVIRONMENTS
A (18-20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents strong focus on <i>purpose</i> Creates clear/complete thesis Responds appropriately using various rhetorical patterns: illustration/description, process analysis, extended definition, and argument/research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly supports thesis with logic and evidence Strongly integrates writer’s ideas with appropriate <i>primary</i> and <i>secondary sources</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafts shows clear evidence of <i>revision</i>, <i>editing</i>, and <i>proofreading</i> with respect to <i>content</i>, <i>development</i>, <i>organization</i>, <i>voice</i>, and <i>mechanics</i> Accompanied by two or more <i>drafts</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor errors in standard <i>grammar</i>, <i>punctuation</i>, <i>capitalization</i>, and <i>spelling</i> may be present. Uses appropriate diction and <i>syntax</i>. Documented appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Final copy</i> and all drafts are typed. Sources strongly reflect <i>location</i>, <i>evaluation</i>, <i>organization</i>, and <i>use</i> of a variety of scholarly and informal electronic and Internet sources.
B (16-17.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus may shift somewhat Creates somewhat clear/complete thesis Responds using various rhetorical patterns: illustration/description, process analysis, extended definition, and argument/research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While essay supports <i>thesis</i> with logic and evidence, some inconsistencies may occur. While writer does integrate ideas with appropriate <i>primary</i> and <i>secondary sources</i>, some inconsistencies may occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafts show some evidence of <i>revision</i>, <i>editing</i>, and <i>proofreading</i> with respect to <i>content</i>, <i>development</i>, <i>organization</i>, <i>voice</i>, and <i>mechanics</i> Accompanied by two or more <i>drafts</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More errors in standard <i>grammar</i>, <i>punctuation</i>, <i>capitalization</i>, and <i>spelling</i> may be present; however, errors do not interfere with writer’s meaning. Uses somewhat appropriate diction and <i>syntax</i>. Minor documentation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Final copy</i> and all/most drafts are typed. Sources reflect <i>location</i>, <i>evaluation</i>, <i>organization</i>, and <i>use</i> of a variety of scholarly and informal electronic and Internet sources.
C (14-15.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vague focus on <i>purpose</i> Creates vague thesis Responds somewhat using various rhetorical patterns: illustration/description, process analysis, extended definition, and argument/research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While essay supports <i>thesis</i> with logic and evidence, a pattern of inconsistencies may occur. While writer does integrate ideas with appropriate <i>primary</i> and <i>secondary sources</i>, a pattern of inconsistencies may occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafts show marginal evidence of <i>revision</i>, <i>editing</i>, and <i>proofreading</i> Accompanied by two or more <i>drafts</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pattern of errors in standard <i>grammar</i>, <i>punctuation</i>, <i>capitalization</i>, and <i>spelling</i> may be present; errors interfere somewhat with writer’s meaning. Uses vague diction and <i>syntax</i>. Pattern of documentation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Final copy</i> is typed. Draft(s) is/are not typed. Sources marginally reflect <i>location</i>, <i>evaluation</i>, <i>organization</i>, and <i>use</i> of a variety of scholarly and informal electronic and Internet sources.
D (12-13.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear focus on <i>purpose</i> Creates unclear thesis Unclear response using various rhetorical patterns: illustration/description, process analysis, extended definition, and argument/research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While there is an attempt to support <i>thesis</i> with logic and evidence, frequent and disruptive inconsistencies that weaken argument occur. While writer does attempt to integrate ideas with appropriate <i>primary</i> and <i>secondary sources</i>, frequent and disruptive inconsistencies may occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drafts show little evidence of <i>revision</i>, <i>editing</i>, and <i>proofreading</i> Accompanied by two or more <i>drafts</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent errors in standard <i>grammar</i>, <i>punctuation</i>, <i>capitalization</i>, and <i>spelling</i> may be present; these errors interfere with writer’s meaning. Uses unclear on <i>diction</i> and <i>syntax</i>. Frequent documentation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Final copy</i> is not typed. Draft(s) (if provided) is/are not typed. Little evidence that sources reflect <i>location</i>, <i>evaluation</i>, <i>organization</i>, and <i>use</i> of a variety of scholarly and informal electronic and Internet sources.
F (0-11.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No focus on <i>purpose</i> No thesis No response using various rhetorical patterns: illustration/description, process analysis, extended definition, and argument/research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No support of thesis with logic and evidence. No integration of ideas with appropriate <i>primary</i> and <i>secondary sources</i> No critical analysis beyond mere opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of <i>revision</i>, <i>editing</i>, or <i>proofreading</i> Accompanied by no <i>draft</i>(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent and serious errors in standard <i>grammar</i>, <i>punctuation</i>, <i>capitalization</i>, and <i>spelling</i> may be present; these errors severely inhibit writer’s meaning. No evidence of focus on <i>diction</i> and <i>syntax</i>. Serious documentation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Final copy</i> is not typed. No draft(s) provided No evidence of attention to source collection

A = 93-100 **A- = 90-92** **B+ = 87-89** **B = 83-86** **B- = 80-82** **C+ = 77-79** **C = 73-76** **C- = 70-72** **D+ = 67-69** **D = 60-66** **F = 0-59**
11/13

Rationale for the Writing Rubric

The foundation of a Quality Enhancement Plan is a strong focus on student learning outcomes. Student learning outcomes consist of desired information or skills students should know and understand at the end of a specific course or predetermined timeframe. The areas of emphasis for the learning outcomes for the Erskine College QEP are as follows: ***Rhetorical Knowledge, Critical Response, Writing as a Process, Knowledge of Conventions, and Composing in Electronic Environments.***

Because instructors from different departments with diverse backgrounds and varying approaches to the art of writing will teach The Write Course, a common rubric is necessary to better ensure standardized assessment of writing at Erskine College. The common writing rubric also provides students and instructors alike with a central document that keeps all parties “on the same page” with respect to writing assessment. Through the use of a rubric, students are no longer left “in the dark” concerning how an instructor reached a grade.

The following provides a closer look at the categories as well as the learning outcomes within those categories:

Rhetorical Knowledge (Thesis and Structure)

- Focus on a purpose
- Create a clear, complete thesis
- Employ various rhetorical patterns for exposition and argument, with an emphasis on the following four patterns: illustration and description, process analysis, extended definition, and argument/research

The section entitled **Rhetorical Knowledge** focuses on your ability to *know why* you are writing. Understanding your purpose for analyzing a subject through writing will help you create and eventually develop an appropriate *thesis*. The *thesis* statement, for example, for a descriptive essay will be simple compared to the *thesis* statement for an argument paper.

Critical Response (Thinking, Writing, Reading) or (Argument and Support)

- Support thesis with logic and evidence
- Integrate the writer’s ideas with appropriate primary and secondary sources

A good writer provides logical evidence to support his or her claims. The **Critical Response** section of the rubric focuses on your ability to move beyond simply writing what you “think” about a particular subject to your ability to provide evidence to support your thoughts and ideas; you need to get into the habit of providing proof from appropriate (college-level) primary and secondary sources to back up what you think. At this level, a passing paper should have a minimum of three scholarly sources. Consider once again using the formula provided on

page six of this handbook to develop your body paragraphs with an emphasis on critical analysis: **main point + proof/evidence + critical analysis.**

Writing as a Process (Drafts and Reviews)

- Generate and revise multiple (at least two) outlines and drafts
- Critique their own and others' writing through peer reviews

Effective writers focus on **writing as a process**, not writing as something that magically happens the night before the paper is due. This process includes the following steps: *prewriting*, *outlining*, *drafting*, *editing*, and *revision*. These steps take time and focus. Effective writers also learn through practice and perseverance how to better critique their own writing and seek out qualified writers to help with the peer review process.

Knowledge of Conventions/Mechanics (Style)

- Employ the conventions of standard usage, focusing on diction, syntax, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling
- Employ appropriate means of documenting work

While you may be able to engage in meaningful critical analysis about a subject, the icing on the cake is your ability to employ a college-level **knowledge of conventions/mechanics**. A growing understanding of the intricacies of the English language with respect to *diction* (word choice), *syntax* (word order), *grammar* (agreement, parts of speech, sentence structure), *punctuation* (commas, colons, semicolons, apostrophes), *capitalization*, and *spelling* coupled with a sincere desire to engage in the proofreading component of the writing process will make a difference in how readers understand and interpret your writing. Mechanical problems can lower your grade by one or two letter grades.

You will also follow a prescribed documentation style such as MLA or APA. Your professor will tell you the preferred style for your section of The Write Course. Keep in mind that each documentation style has its own unique and particular set of rules for accurately documenting your work.

Composing in Electronic Environments (Using Computer for Research and Writing)

- Use electronic environments for all drafts and final copy
- Locate, evaluate, organize, and use research material collected from electronic sources, including scholarly library databases; other official databases (e.g. federal government databases); and informal electronic networks and internet source

This is college. All out-of-class writing turned in for a grade should be typed and submitted to your professor with multiple drafts. The **Composing in Electronic Documents** part of the rubric also means that you will employ efficient strategies for locating, evaluating, organizing, and using college-level research materials that you found using scholarly academic or official databases (instead of random Google searches). Effective writing with an emphasis on critical analysis takes time, patience, and planning.

Documentation

(Part IX, Chapters 46-55 in *The Bedford Handbook*, covers research and MLA documentation.)

Locating Sources

Finding useful sources to support your main ideas/claims can be frustrating. A random search using popular search engines like *Google* or *Yahoo* might seem like an effective way to begin your task, but doing so will most likely yield so many hits that wading through the sea of information becomes a daunting task. Besides, your natural inclination may be to use the first sources to appear, and those sources may not be the best ones to support your claim(s).

Erskine College's McCain Library is a good place to begin your search. Ask for assistance with your topic. The experts in the library will point you in the right direction and help you get the most out of your time spent researching a topic. Many students neglect to use the resources available in the library, but hours of searching can be eliminated if you take the time to go over and let the professionals there help you begin your search.

Scholarly journal articles will be the best quality sources, but they are often packed with information that takes time to read and understand. They are reliable sources because they have been reviewed by peers in the field prior to publication. You will most likely have to use an on-line database for scholarly journal articles. For topics that may be a bit older, **scholarly books** can help. For current statistical information, **government Web sites** may be used. **Newspapers** and **magazines** also provide valuable information concerning recent topics. While **videos**, **documentaries**, **audios**, and **television programs** can provide useful information to support your claims, you may want to consult your professor before relying too heavily on these sources for support.

Ask yourself if your sources are relevant to your topic, trustworthy in their presentation of information, and valid to support the claim you seek to support. Here are some questions to consider about sources, especially those sources found on the Web: Who published it? When was it published? Is the source too outdated? Who is the author? What are the author's credentials? Does the author exhibit a bias? Is that bias justified, or does it weaken the source? Why is one particular source better than another?

Citing Sources

Part IX of *The Bedford Handbook* addresses research. Within this section you will find that correctly citing sources helps you avoid plagiarism. *Plagiarism* is the **intentional** or

unintentional use of another writer's language, structure, or ideas without providing proper documentation that gives that writer credit for the original work. Correctly cite sources when you quote, paraphrase, or summarize another writer's work, or when you use facts that are not common knowledge.

Unless instructed otherwise, follow the documentation rules for the Modern Language Association (MLA) found in chapters 50-55 of *The Bedford Handbook*. Departments other than English or some humanities sections may require you to use the American Psychological Association (APA) system or the system based on *The Chicago Manual of Style*, a system that uses footnotes or endnotes. *The Bedford Handbook* addresses these three styles, and you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with your instructor's preferred style.

Whichever system you use, **correctly citing your sources is your responsibility**. You're in college now. Following the guidelines set forth by *The Bedford Handbook* and your instructor also ensures that you avoid plagiarism while completing your writing assignments with integrity. Accurate adherence to the particular rules associated with a specific system is not easy, and only with practice will you get better at it.

Using Quotations

If you elect to use another person's exact words, you are required to cite those words exactly as the original author intended. Use quotation marks to indicate that you have quoted someone. Again, you are responsible for correctly citing quotations.

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is "putting it into your own words." You will usually paraphrase when the source is important, but the author's original wording or sentence structure is not as important. Because a paraphrase is essentially the same information, your version will be similar in length to the original. If your paraphrase uses too much of the original language or follows the original sentence structure too closely, you will be guilty of plagiarism. Successfully paraphrasing another author's work requires careful attention to detail as well as a thorough understanding of the material.

Summarizing

A summary is similar to a paraphrase because you use your own words. A summary differs from a paraphrase because your focus is on the main ideas instead of particular details. A complete article or chapter may be summarized in one or two sentences. Summarizing is an effective way to refer to a complete book or long work that you want to use as support.

Using Source Materials in Your Own Writing

One of the more noticeable mistakes writers make is a failure to introduce source material properly. Simply putting a parenthetical citation after a direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary is not enough; you should introduce your source by acknowledging the author and his

or her credentials. An effective way to incorporate source material is to use **signal phrases** like the following:

- **According to** author and lecturer ...
- In her article “Media Nation,” Louise Keller **maintains** that ...
- Thomas L. Friedman, author of *Longitudes and Latitudes*, **claims** that ...
- A recent study from the American Psychological Associations **indicates** ...

Common Mechanics and Usage Errors

Sentences (Part XI, Chapters 61-64 in *The Bedford Handbook*, focuses specifically on sentences.)

Sentences make up the basic building blocks of your writing. A sentence is a complete thought that contains a subject and a verb (predicate). If your sentences do not make sense or if the reader doesn't understand your point, no matter how good your development or organization is, your writing will not be effective. Poor sentence structure hinders your ability to convey your point or support your claim. Poor sentence structure prevents the reader's ability to understand your thought process. **Remember this: Your writing is the only way an instructor can really understand what you are thinking.**

Fragments – A fragment is an incomplete thought. Sentence fragments lack either a subject (someone or something) or a predicate (the action or state of being).

Joseph sat on the bench. All by himself and lonely. [*All by himself and lonely* is a fragment; it does not convey a complete thought because it lacks a predicate (a verb).]

Possible Corrections

Joseph sat on the bench all by himself and lonely.

Joseph sat on the bench. He was all by himself and lonely.

Joseph, all by himself and lonely, sat on the bench.

Run-on Sentences – A run-on sentence joins two complete thoughts (two sentences) without using the correct punctuation. (**Chapter 20 in *The Bedford Handbook* addresses run-on sentences.**)

Sandra looked at the key to her apartment she felt excited about moving out on her own. (*Sandra looked at the key to her apartment* is a complete thought. *She felt excited about moving out on her own* is another complete thought.)

Possible Corrections

Sandra looked at the key to her apartment. She felt excited about being on her own.

Sandra looked at the key to her apartment; she felt excited about being on her own.

Sandra looked at the key to her apartment, and she felt excited about being on her own.

Sandra looked at the key to her apartment and felt excited about being on her own.

Comma Splices – A comma splice occurs when two complete thoughts (just like the run-on sentence above) are joined by a comma instead of a period or a semicolon. **(Chapter 33 in *The Bedford Handbook* addresses unnecessary comma use.)**

Most students find their courses interesting, they might not enjoy all of them. (The comma should be replaced by a stronger piece of punctuation to denote that two complete thoughts exist.)

Possible Corrections

Most students find their courses interesting. They might not enjoy all of them.

Most students find their courses interesting even though they might not enjoy all of them.

Most students find their courses interesting; they might not enjoy all of them.

Even though they may not enjoy all of their classes, most students find their coursework interesting.

Punctuation (Part VII, Chapters 32-39 in *The Bedford Handbook*, addresses punctuation.)

Commas – (Chapters 32-33 in *The Bedford Handbook*) Commas plague writers more than any other piece of punctuation. Why? In most cases, either writers have not learned the rules, or they have been taught wrong information regarding commas. Some people feel that commas indicate a natural pause in the flow of the sentence, and they employ this “rule” as their solitary guideline for using commas. Unfortunately, commas do not necessarily mean *to pause*. Certainly you might pause at the comma while reading a sentence, but the comma itself does not inherently indicate a pause. Read the following sentence: *My mother lives in Columbia, South Carolina, with my two sisters.* Despite the two commas, no pauses are necessary.

The bottom line is this: In order to use commas effectively, you must learn some of the more common rules. Period. It’s that simple. Once you have committed to memory some basic comma rules, and once you begin to employ those rules, your writing will be that much better. Here follow some simple rules to help make your writing more effective by correctly using commas.

Use a comma after an introductory adverb clause. An adverb clause begins with a subordinating conjunction. The following is a list of some regularly used subordinating conjunctions: *after, although, as, as if, because, before, provided, that, since, so that, if, though, while, unless, until, when, whenever, where, wherever, why, while*.

Here are some examples:

- *Because* Edgar Allan Poe spent his life struggling as a writer, he died a penniless man.

- *Before* one decides to go to graduate school, she must consider all her options.
- *So that* the speaker may better read his audience, he must be aware of their cognitive dissonance.
- *Unless* one takes the time to read a passage critically, the more complex meanings will be lost.

Use a comma after an introductory prepositional phrase that is four or more words.

While some textbooks are more specific with this rule, sticking to this simple formula can help make your use of commas more effective. Some commonly used prepositions are as follows: *after, above, on, with, to, of, for, inside, into, without, up, beside, around, below, outside, within, because of, in front of, in addition to.*

A prepositional phrase consists of the preposition and its object. The object of the preposition follows the preposition, usually answers the questions *whom* or *what*, and will be a noun or a pronoun.

After lunch with my parents, I decided to go shopping. (*After lunch* is a prepositional phrase. *Lunch* is the object of the preposition. *After lunch* is a prepositional phrase. *With my parents* is a prepositional phrase, and *parents* is the object of the preposition.)

Here are some examples of this comma rule:

- After lunch with my parents, I decided to go shopping.
- For our next presentation, Susan will argue the need for more government oversight with respect to health care.
- Beside the car in front of gas station, Eric waited for his friend's call.
- In addition to knowing how to surf, Virginia also knows how to snow ski.

Use a comma to separate two independent clauses joined by a coordination conjunction. The coordinating conjunctions can be remembered with the following acronym: **FAN BOYS** – *For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So*. Understanding this rule is important, for writers use it all the time. Consciously using this rule will help you vary your sentence structure and create a more interesting piece of writing.

Here are some examples:

- The reasons for our needing to stick to the rules are many, **and** following the rules could save our lives.
- Our intentions were not to interfere with the operation, **nor** did we intend to cause any harm.
- Read the article and come to your own conclusion, **but** you may want to complete the reading in a quiet place.

- Martin returned to camp exhausted and weary, **yet** he claimed that his ordeal alone in the wilderness made him stronger.
- The author develops her argument in a linear fashion, **so** the outcome seems to be strong and effective.

Avoid comma splices – A comma splice occurs when the writer joins two independent clauses (two complete thoughts) with a comma instead of a comma and a coordinating conjunction.

Here are some more examples:

- Many writers use confusing syntax, they use too many words. (**Add the word *and* after the comma.**)
- Students need meaningful opportunities to practice writing, practice improves effectiveness. (**Replace the comma with the word *because*.**)
- The hikers topped the hill in time to see the black bear slip around a boulder, they wondered if they should turn around and go home. (**Add the word *and* after the comma.**)

Semicolons – (Chapter 34 in *The Bedford Handbook*) The use of a semicolon is another good way for you to vary your sentence structure and make your writing more interesting. While the semicolon has many uses, a primary function of this piece of punctuation is that it joins two independent clauses. Look back at the last comma rule about independent clauses; take out the coordinating conjunctions (FAN BOYS) and replace the commas with semicolons. Another point to consider is that the second clause is usually related to the first clause in order for the rule to be applicable.

Here's how those sentences from the previous comma rule would look with semicolons:

- The reasons for our needing to stick to the rules are many; following the rules could save our lives.
- Our intentions were not to interfere with the operation; we did not intend to cause any harm.
- Read the article and come to your own conclusion; you may want to complete the reading in some place quiet.
- Martin returned to camp exhausted and weary; he claimed that his ordeal alone in the wilderness made him stronger.
- The author develops her argument in a linear fashion; the outcome seems to be strong and effective.

Apostrophes – (Chapter 36 in *The Bedford Handbook*) The apostrophe seems to give people problems. In short, an apostrophe has two functions:

- **It shows ownership.** (Jane's, Marie's, Chris's, dog's, people's, men's, women's, children's, cars')
- **It shows that something is missing** (usually a letter or letters) as in a contraction. (it's, isn't, let's, that's, aren't, o'clock, '90s)

Here are some common apostrophe errors:

It's	=	it is
Its	=	possessive pronoun/adjective
who's	=	who is
whose	=	interrogative pronoun/adjective

Contrary to popular belief, the apostrophe **does not usually make a word plural**. Here are some examples of common apostrophe errors with respect to plurals:

<u>Incorrect</u>	<u>Correct</u>
Jones'	Joneses
Cox's	Coxes
Phillips'	Phillipses
nacho's	nachos
video's	videos
DVD's	DVDs
1940's	1940s

There is one exception to the plurals rule: When the adding of an *s* forms a new word, use an apostrophe to avoid confusion. One of the best examples comes from the Veggie Tales movie entitled *The Wizard of Ha's*. Without the apostrophe, *Ha's* becomes *Has*.

Quotation Marks – (Chapter 37 in *The Bedford Handbook*) Quotation marks are used to punctuate short titles.

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| - Short Stories | "A Good Man is Hard to Find" |
| - Poems | "The Raven" |
| - Article Titles | "What the King James Hath Wrought" |
| - Essay Titles | "The Cowardice of On-line Anonymity" |

Italics/Underlining – (Chapter 42 in *The Bedford Handbook*) Titles of longer works are underlined (when writing) and italicized (when typing).

- Novels *The Grapes of Wrath*
- Books *The Bedford Handbook*
- Movies *Star Wars: A New Hope*
- Television Shows *American Idol*
- Magazines *Sports Illustrated*
- Web Sites *scdiscuss.org*
- Aircraft The space shuttle *Challenger*
- Trains *The Flying Yankee*
- Watercrafts *Titanic, USS Arizona*

Agreement

Both agreement between the subject and verb and the pronoun and its antecedent are crucial to the effectiveness of your writing. A lack of agreement can lead to confusion.

Subject/Verb – (Chapter 21 in *The Bedford Handbook*) In standard American English, subjects and verbs should agree in number. This means that plural subjects need plural verbs, and singular subjects require singular verbs. Here are some hints to help you remember how to make your subjects and verbs agree:

- Singular subjects usually **do not end with an s**. (book, dog, desk, house, author, publisher, kite)
- Plural subjects usually **do end with an s**. (books, dogs, desks, houses, authors, publishers, kites)
- Singular verbs usually **do end with an s**. (book *is*, dog *eats*, house *has*, author *contends*, kite *soars*)
- Plural verbs usually **do not end with an s**. (books *are*, dogs *eat*, houses *have*, authors *contend*, kites *soar*)
- Some plural subjects do not end in s. (men, women, children, media, data)
 - The **media are** watching the events surrounding the upcoming election. (*Medium* is the singular of *media*.)
 - The **data have** been collected and **are** now being analyzed. (*Datum* is the singular of *data*.)

- The prepositional phrase between the subject and verb will often need to be “removed” to determine agreement. (The letters on the desk are mine. Remove *on the desk* to accurately determine that *letters* is the subject, not *desk*.)

Pronoun Antecedent – (Chapters 22-24 in *The Bedford Handbook*) A pronoun agrees with its antecedent (the word that the pronoun replaces) in number. What this means is that a plural pronoun must replace a plural antecedent, and a singular pronoun must replace a singular antecedent. Political correctness has undermined this rule, thus creating confusion among many writers. Here are some examples:

- *Each, every, one, everyone, everybody, no one, none, nothing, something, any, anything, another, either, and neither* are singular indefinite pronouns. That means these words must have singular verbs (verbs ending in *s*) and singular antecedents.
 - ***Each*** member of the class must include ***his*** correct mailing address.
 - ***Each*** member of the class must include ***her*** correct mailing address.
 - ***Everyone needs her*** own place of safety and solace.
 - ***Everyone needs his*** own place of safety and solace.
- **Note:** Moving away from the singular versions of confusing pronouns to the plural versions is an effective way to avoid a) awkward phrasing and b) the sticky arena of political correctness.
 - **Students** in the class must include **their** correct mailing addresses.
 - **People** need **their** own places of safety and solace.

Usage

Usage errors usually occur with words that writers find confusing, like *affect* or *effect* or *emigrate* or *immigrate*. On **pages 789-803 in *The Bedford Handbook***, you can find a “Glossary of Usage” that addresses most of the usage error that plague most writers.

Active v. Passive Voice

Voice is essentially the form of the verb that indicates whether the subject of the sentence *performs an action* (active voice) or *is acted upon* (passive voice). Passive voice relies on the use of one of the verb forms of *to be* plus a past participle of the primary verb. Passive voice also uses helping verbs (*has, have, had*) or linking verbs (*is, are, was, were*). Effective

writing relies on the strong images created by the active voice. See **pages 142-147 in *The Bedford Handbook*** for more information on active and passive voice.

Here are some comparisons:

Active Voice

Passive Voice

Beowulf kills Grendel.

Beowulf is killed by Grendel.

The writer appreciates criticism.

Criticism is appreciated by the writer.

Students use libraries.

Libraries are used by students.

Ice cools the surface temperature.

The surface temperature is cooled by ice.

Appendix A

Writing Assessment Rubric for EN 102 (Adapted from WC 201 Rubric)

02/12

GRADE	FOCUS AND THESIS (Introduction)	RHETORICAL KNOWLEDGE (Organization)	CRITICAL RESPONSE (Development with Logic and Evidence)	KNOWLEDGE OF CONVENTIONS (Style and Documentation)	Writing as a Process (Peer Reviews, Revisions, and Research)
A (18-20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presents strong focus on purpose Creates clear/complete thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds appropriately using various rhetorical patterns: comparison/contrast, classification analysis, causal analysis, or argument/research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strongly supports thesis with logic and evidence Strongly integrates writer's ideas with appropriate <i>primary</i> and <i>secondary sources</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minor errors in standard <i>grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</i> may be present. Clear focus on <i>diction</i> and <i>syntax</i> Documented appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources strongly reflect <i>location, evaluation, organization,</i> and use of a variety of scholarly and informal electronic and Internet sources when appropriate. Drafts show clear evidence of <i>revision, editing, and proofreading</i> with respect to <i>content, development, organization, voice, and mechanics.</i> Accompanied by one or more rough <i>drafts peer reviewed</i>
B (16 - 17.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus may shift somewhat Creates somewhat clear/complete thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds using various rhetorical patterns: comparison/contrast, classification analysis, causal analysis, or argument/research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While essay supports <i>thesis</i> with logic and evidence, some inconsistencies may occur. While writer does integrate ideas with appropriate <i>primary</i> and <i>secondary sources</i>, some inconsistencies may occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More errors in standard <i>grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</i> may be present; however, errors do not interfere with writer's meaning. Somewhat clear focus on <i>diction</i> and <i>syntax</i> Minor documentation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources reflect <i>location, evaluation, organization,</i> and use of a variety of scholarly and informal electronic and Internet sources when appropriate. Drafts show some evidence of <i>revision, editing, and proofreading</i> with respect to <i>content, development, organization, voice, and mechanics.</i> Accompanied by one or more rough <i>drafts peer reviewed</i>
C (14-15.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vague focus on <i>purpose</i> Creates vague thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds somewhat using various rhetorical patterns: comparison/contrast, classification analysis, causal analysis, or argument/research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While essay supports <i>thesis</i> with logic and evidence, a pattern of inconsistencies may occur. While writer does integrate ideas with appropriate <i>primary</i> and <i>secondary sources</i>, a pattern of inconsistencies may occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pattern of errors in standard <i>grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</i> may be present; errors interfere somewhat with writer's meaning. Vague focus on <i>diction</i> and <i>syntax</i> Pattern of documentation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sources marginally reflect <i>location, evaluation, organization,</i> and use of a variety of scholarly and informal electronic and Internet sources when appropriate. Drafts show marginal evidence of <i>revision, editing, and proofreading.</i> Accompanied by one or more rough <i>drafts peer reviewed</i>
D (12-13.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear focus on <i>purpose</i> Creates unclear thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unclear response using various rhetorical patterns: comparison/contrast, classification analysis, causal analysis, or argument/research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While there is an attempt to support <i>thesis</i> with logic and evidence, frequent and disruptive inconsistencies that weaken argument occur. While writer does attempt to integrate ideas with appropriate <i>primary</i> and <i>secondary sources</i>, frequent and disruptive inconsistencies may occur. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent errors in standard <i>grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</i> may be present; these errors interfere with writer's meaning. Unclear focus on <i>diction</i> and <i>syntax</i> Frequent documentation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little evidence that sources reflect <i>location, evaluation, organization,</i> and use of a variety of scholarly and informal electronic and Internet sources when appropriate Drafts show little evidence of <i>revision, editing, and proofreading.</i> Accompanied by one or more rough <i>drafts peer reviewed</i>
F (0-11.9)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No focus on <i>purpose</i> No thesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No response using various rhetorical patterns: comparison/contrast, classification analysis, causal analysis, or argument/research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No support of thesis with logic and evidence No integration of ideas with appropriate <i>primary</i> and <i>secondary sources</i> No critical analysis beyond mere opinion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Frequent and serious errors in standard <i>grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling</i> may be present; these errors severely inhibit writer's meaning. No focus on <i>diction</i> and <i>syntax</i> Serious documentation errors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No evidence of attention to source collection No evidence of <i>revision, editing, or proofreading</i> Accompanied by no rough <i>draft(s)</i> peer reviewed

A = 93-100 A- = 90-92 B+ = 87-89 B = 83-86 B- = 80-82 C+ = 77-79 C = 73-76 C- = 70-72 D+ = 67-69 D = 60-66 F = 0-59

Bolded terminology represents assessment; *italicized terms* represent a) familiar terms students should know from high school and b) terms common to all sections of The Write Course.

Appendix B

Sample Peer Evaluation Form

Writer: _____

Peer Editor: _____

Consider the following points as you read the typed rough draft; check off and/or write comments.

_____ *Thesis statement*: Clear? Does the writer take a position? Circle *thesis*. Introduction creates interest (*hook*)? (Put parentheses around *hook*.)

_____ Specific details to support position: Can the editor note a minimum of three specific *topics/details* in the introduction to support the author's position? Underline them.

_____ *Logical organization*: Easy flow of ideas from one point to the next? Paragraphs that support *topic sentences* arranged in a logical manner? Underline topic sentences/sentences that support thesis in each paragraph.

_____ Is essay a minimum of *five paragraphs/long enough*?

_____ *Paragraphs fully developed* (5+ sentences per paragraph)?

_____ *Sentences varied* in form and length?

_____ *Language/vocabulary* appropriate?

_____ Writer refers to author(s) by his/her last name(s).

_____ *Spelling, punctuation, capitalization*, used correctly? Article titles in “quotation marks”; books *italicized*.

_____ Does the writer avoid *common usage errors*?

_____ *Conclusion*: Summary/point of emphasis relating back to the *thesis statement*?

_____ Is essay written in correct *verb tense*?

_____ Correct information/correct order upper left, page 1.

_____ *Header and page number* correct?

_____ *Title*: Appropriate, needs no improvement?

_____ *Parenthetical citations* or *signal phrases* correct?

_____ Multiple *sources* correctly cited in paper?

_____ *Works cited page* correct and matches examples in Bedford?