

Checklist of Basic Writing Skills

One of Kenyon’s central educational goals is for our students to “learn to formulate ideas rigorously and communicate them effectively, in speaking and in writing.” Please use the criteria below to characterize the work of each of the students in **one** of your classes on **one** writing assignment to which you feel most of these criteria apply. If a criterion is not applicable to the writing assignment you’re using for this exercise, place a mark in the column labeled N/A. Otherwise, circle or mark the column that best characterizes the student’s work (using “Good” and “Marginal” to represent work falling between the characterizations described in the adjoining columns). Complete one sheet per student and send the whole stack to the Associate Provosts’ Office by campus mail, along with a note describing the course, the assignment, and the level (or range of levels) of the students in the class. If your department’s senior exercise would be an appropriate assignment on which to use this tool, please evaluate your seniors’ work on it and attach a copy of the senior exercise assignment as it is communicated to your students. If you prefer to use a spreadsheet to record your responses to each student’s work, please let us provide you with the spreadsheet we will be using to analyze these data.

Category	Criterion	N/A	Exemplary	Good	Competent	Marginal	Unacceptable
Content	Approach to subject matter		Original, logical approach to topic that acknowledges complexity and/or ambiguity; sustained, consistent analysis		Logical, appropriate approach to topic; adequate analysis with some inconsistencies		Illogical, inappropriate or oversimplified approach to topic; inadequate analysis with frequent inconsistencies
	Development of primary ideas		Main ideas well-defined and developed with depth and thoroughness		Main ideas reasonably well-defined and developed		Main ideas poorly defined, underdeveloped
	Use of evidence		Evidence is germane, critically evaluated, and convincingly interpreted		Supplies evidentiary basis for argument		Lacking or faulty evidence
Organization	Introduction		Engages reader as it develops focus and purpose		Develops focus and purpose		Fails to develop focus and purpose
	Sequence and development of paragraphs		Logical, coherent sequence of paragraphs demonstrating clear analytical development; fluid transitions between ideas		A few lapses in coherence and analytical development of paragraphs; occasional lack of transition		Paragraph sequence lacks logic; paragraphs often lack analytical development; failure to provide transitions between ideas
	Conclusion		Sums up main ideas and points to larger implications or places ideas in broader context		Sums up main ideas		Superficial or cursory summing up of main ideas
Style	Grammatical norms		Consistently uses standard spelling, punctuation, and grammar		Uses standard spelling, punctuation, and grammar with occasional lapses		Frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar
	Diction		Thoughtful, clear word choice		Word choice appropriate to purpose		Frequent inappropriate word choice
	Voice		Writer’s unique sensibility revealed		Writing is clear but sometimes clichéd or generic		Writing is often clichéd or generic
	Sentence clarity and conciseness		Clear, vigorous, concise sentences		Sentences are readable but lack conciseness and vigor		Sentences lack clarity, conciseness, and vigor
Research	Choice of sources		Number and types of sources thoroughly address topic		Number and type of sources appropriate for project		Insufficient or inappropriate sources
	Integration of sources		Source material thoughtfully and smoothly integrated		Occasional awkwardness in integrating source material		Source material inserted into text without sufficient context
	Documentation of sources		Consistently uses standard documentation procedures in text and bibliography		Uses standard documentation procedures with a few lapses		Fails to use standard documentation procedures