

Definition of Four-Level Ratings of Overall Competence in Written Communication

Overall Writing Competence (Check One)

- Level One: Not Competent College-Level Writing
- Level Two: Emerging College-Level Writing Competence
- Level Three: Competent College-Level Writing
- Level Four: Highly Competent College-Level Writing

Overall competence in college-level written communication in print and digital environments includes an understanding of audience, purpose, genre, content, and thinking processes appropriate to the level of course, as demonstrated through the appropriate use of rhetorical and (inter)disciplinary/workplace conventions, to include:

- format, tone, and vocabulary;
- organization of argument/information;
- evidence from experience, observation, and/or primary and secondary sources; and
- standard edited American English.

Overall Rating	Definition
Highly Competent	The writer demonstrates a strong and clear understanding of audience, purpose, genre, discipline- or course-content, and the thinking processes appropriate to an intermediate or advanced college course, as evidenced by the use of appropriate format, tone, and vocabulary; clear organization and thorough development of argument/information; credible evidence integrated and documented accurately; and standard edited American English. The writing makes a substantive, original argument or other contribution to the field; it demonstrates strong sentence-level fluency and/or has a clear authorial voice.
Competent	The writer demonstrates a competent understanding of audience, purpose, genre, content, and the thinking processes appropriate to intermediate college-level coursework, as evidenced by the use of appropriate format, tone, and vocabulary; clear organization and development of argument/information; and credible evidence integrated and documented accurately. While all of these rhetorical elements are present, some may be less developed or uneven. Though an argument may be clearly stated, it may lack originality and/or depth. The writing may contain some errors in standard edited American English but readability is not compromised.
Emerging	The writer demonstrates an emerging understanding of audience, purpose, and content, and the thinking processes appropriate for an introductory level of college writing competence, as evidenced by the use of appropriate format, tone, and vocabulary; organization of argument/information; and integration and documentation of supporting evidence. While these rhetorical elements have been attempted, some may be less-than-satisfactorily accomplished. The writing may contain some errors in standard edited American English that do not consistently compromise readability.
Not Competent	The writer demonstrates little understanding of audience, purpose, format, and/or the thinking processes appropriate to college-level writing. A majority of these rhetorical elements are weak or absent, as evidenced by an unclear sense of audience and/or purpose; confusing organization and/or format; weak, inappropriate, and/or undocumented evidence. Writing that displays frequent errors in standard edited American English that consistently compromise readability may be rated at this level particularly if other key rhetorical features are weak or absent.