

Department of English
Placement Essay Criteria

The following outline for placement essay readers has been established, reviewed, and applied by the department each academic year. Readers are reminded that the criteria are applied to the student's writing whose baseline is to be an essay with college-level skills.

WRT 020 - English as a Second Language

Sample shows language difficulties resulting from second or third language acquisition. Sample tends to lack a clear sense of English word forms, word order, and word meaning.

WRT 030 - Basic Writing Skills 1

Placement sample may show little or no content; skills problems (including handwriting) often seriously interfere with communication. Look for such problems as random punctuation, rudimentary vocabulary, poor sentence sense (lacks coherence and/or logic), and serious problems at the word level such as inappropriate word endings and misspellings of commonly used words.

WRT 040 - Basic Writing Skills 2

Sample demonstrates some control of the composing process and communicates an experience or an idea, *but* is impeded by problems with paragraph development (lacks a unifying idea, has little or no support), sentence structure, diction (lacks clear control of nouns and verbs, uses oral language patterns rather than written language conventions, misuses commonly confused words, shows inappropriate or incorrect word choice), punctuation, and/or spelling.

ENG 101 - Freshman English 1

Sample shows acceptable essay structure. Student can state the central idea of a paragraph and provides some supporting details for the central idea in his/her paragraph; student uses appropriate word choice, shows basic patterns of standard written English sentences, and has sentence sense (coherence and logic). The writer avoids or corrects fragments, improperly joined sentences and incorrectly spelled words.

Placement Essay Rubric

This rubric is designed to assist in grading placement essays. Since this is a holistic process, a single error in any one category should not affect a student's placement. Each column below lists the established department criteria for determining placement in Basic Writing Skills 1, Basic Writing Skills 2, or Freshman English 1.

	WRT 030 (sentence to paragraph)	WRT 040 (paragraph to essay)	ENG 101 (rudimentary essay to more advanced college-level essay)
Main Idea	Doesn't address the assignment	Suggests unifying idea/attempts to address assignment	States central unifying idea as thesis; addresses assignment
Support	Little or no content	Some control of the composition process at the paragraph level; attempts to support (inconsistent); support not always relevant	Multi-paragraph structure; adequate support; pertinent support
Sentence Sense	Lacks variety Faulty construction Lack coherence, logic	Some variety Fragments, comma splices, run-ons Problems with logic	Standard sentence patterns Avoids or corrects fragments, comma splices, run-ons Logical, coherent
Diction	Serious problem at word level	Oral language patterns (subjective tone)	Appropriate diction (subjective tone)
Vocabulary/Word Choice	Rudimentary vocabulary	Inappropriate/incorrect word choice	Appropriate word choice
Nouns/Verbs	Inappropriate words endings	Shifts in tense Subject-verb disagreement	Demonstrates competency
Spelling	Misspells basic words (whent for went)	Commonly confused, misspelled words (there, they're, their/recieved for received)	Applies spelling rules
Punctuation	Random punctuation	Problems with internal punctuation	Demonstrates punctuation competency
Capitalization	Inconsistent (Monday, but not Friday)	Common errors (High School/English)	Appropriate use of caps