

Communication Standards

revised June 2009

CRITERIA	Strategy and Critical Thinking:	Logic and Reasoning:	Structure Coherence:	Information Design:	Error/interference:
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audience Awareness • Clear Purpose • Ability to frame and identify a clear problem or position • Articulated strategic approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logical units of discourse • Clear claims • Support/evidence indicating research, data, statistics, primary/secondary sources • Clear data sets indicated and proven 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coherent “whole” • Internal logic • Idea/section unity & integrity • Transitions • Coherent intro/summary • Section development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formatting appropriate for communication task • Visual design (use of white space, illustrations, graphs) • Headings and sub-headings used properly • Professionalism • Readability/accessibility of information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disruptive errors • Credibility errors • Etiquette errors • Accent errors
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined sense of audience and purpose • <u>Purpose statement</u> coherent, overreaching, encompasses higher idea • <u>Forecasting statement</u> provides structural cohesion and unity; acknowledges and informs audience of guiding structure. • <u>Relationship and tone</u> Acknowledges relational value and confirms audience status and knowledge base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasoning units, consisting primarily of claims and support are logical, credible and complete. • Claims are explicitly stated, explained, and substantiated with supporting evidence. • Support is relevant to claims, varied, concrete and engaging 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forms a meaningful whole with a controlling idea that is logically developed and each section or idea related to the next. • No re-reading or repeating necessary even if content is complex • Section development is cohesive and “adds up” • Each section can “stand alone” in terms of coherence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information presented in a way that fulfills all requirements as outlined in the assignment. • Visual design is professional and compresses complex graphical information for rapid absorption. • Correct graphics have been selected and enhance the comprehension of complex material. • Headings and sub-headings are not distracting and enhance readability. • Bullets and lists are used to enhance and clarify meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No errors interfere with communication or damage credibility. • No disruptive errors present although some accent errors are acceptable. • Client Ready and professional.
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly defined sense of audience and purpose • <u>Purpose statement</u> coherent and stated clearly • <u>Forecasting statement</u> provides an overview, but usually stated simply (a list) • <u>Relationship and tone</u> commensurate with established relationship with audience and purpose of document, presentation or other communications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasoning units, consisting primarily of claims and support are logical and credible. • Claims are explicitly stated, and explained. • Support is relevant to claims and varied. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Text or presentation forms some overall sense of meaning around a central idea and a generally logical movement from one section or idea to the next. • Occasional re-reading or repeating may be necessary but unclear sections are few and minor. • Section development is evident. • Each section “stands alone” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information presented in a way that fulfills all requirements as outlined in the assignment. • Visual design is professional. • Some powerful graphics have been selected, but others are still needed. Not all selections enhance the comprehension of complex material. • Headings and sub-headings might require editing. • Bullets and lists are usually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Errors do not seriously interfere with communication or damage credibility. • Occasional disruptive errors and/or some credibility errors and etiquette errors. • May have frequent accent errors. • Not quite client ready.

				used to enhance and clarify meaning.	
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sense of audience and purpose is not immediately clear. • <u>Purpose statement</u> awkward or absent. • <u>Forecasting statement</u> absent or not relevant to sub-sections of report (out of order or missing) • <u>Relationship and tone</u> inappropriate or erratic. Lapses in judgment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasoning units are inadequate or incomplete. • Claims may be undeveloped with little or no support. • Support may be insufficient or seem simplistic (the “everyone knows” type); or may be inappropriate to claim. • Claims may be vague, difficult to find or irrelevant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some sections hold together but overall do not form a meaningful whole; context may be missing, parts may be unclear, inconsistent or unrelated. • Cohesive devices (bullets or lists) may be used inappropriately in an attempt to compensate for lack of overall meaning. • Frequent rereading or repeating of specific sections may be required • Sections remain unclear • Gaps in logic, lapses in comprehension, lack of transition (overview, summary, explication.) • Section development not evident 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information presented in a way that does not fulfill requirements as outlined in the assignment. • Visual design lacks polish. • Appropriate graphics are needed (incorrect selection or not appropriately labeled) • Selections do not enhance the comprehension of complex material. • Headings and sub-headings absent. • Bullets and lists are used as a short cut to meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Errors interfere with communication or damage credibility. • Some disruptive errors and/or frequent credibility errors and etiquette errors. • May have numerous accent errors. • Revisions required.
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear audience and purpose • No forecasting or purpose statement • Inappropriate tone • Misreads audience needs and knowledge base 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claims are vague, difficult to find, insignificant or irrelevant. • Little or no support for claims or support presented without claim. • Little or insubstantial research. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No overall sense of a meaningful whole. • Cohesive devices used inappropriately, indicating lack of a section’s cohesion or purpose. • Areas require re-reading or repeating, and even then remain unclear. • Disjointed and incomplete sense of purpose and meaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formatting is incomplete and does not meet requirements. • Visual display not labeled and/or distorts data. • Visual cohesion lacking. • Bullets and lists used excessively indicate lapses in logic and gaps in thought process. • Doesn’t follow directions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Errors interfere seriously with communication and damage credibility. Frequent errors of all types. • Demands conference and multiple revisions.

Error Interference Definition:

Disruptive Errors: Disruptive errors can be recognized in unintelligible sentences, omitted words/phrases, unclear pronoun references, incorrect verb forms, run-on sentences, wrong words. This type of error tends to make the reader’s task more difficult, even intruding on the reading process. Disruptive errors may also interfere with communication, preventing the reader from comprehending what the writer means.

Credibility Errors: Credibility errors can be recognized in faulty subject/verb agreements, some punctuation errors, spelling errors – while these do not usually disrupt communication they tend to reflect negatively on the writer’s credibility, reducing the readers’ confidence in what a writer has to say. Credibility errors become serious if they cause the reader to judge a writers’ character or management ability by the frequency of mere presence of certain violations of Standard English.

Etiquette Errors: Many readers (but not all) hardly notice etiquette errors, especially if reading quickly for the moment. Etiquette errors include: substituting “I” for “me” after prepositions; substituting “someone left their report” instead of his/her; misplacing apostrophes (team’s /teams’); confusing it’s and its; excessive use of passive voice. However, etiquette errors can reduce the writer’s credibility, especially with those readers who are concerned about professional image or those who believe that critical thinking is reflected in the observance of grammar rules.

Accent Errors: Commonly found in the writing of non-native speakers – (which are nearly impossible for non-native speakers to correct in the short term) – these are often overlooked and ignored by readers, particularly if they are cognizant of the status of the writer. Accent errors rarely interfere with communication, and they usually do not seriously damage the writer’s credibility. These include missing or incorrect articles, wrong prepositions, or incorrect use of idioms.