

**Plymouth State University Graduate Studies  
Writing Assessment  
Rubric**

Essential Elements	1	2	3	4	5	6
Purpose	Lacks purpose	Unclear purpose	Limited expression of purpose	Purpose is clearly expressed	Purpose is clearly expressed	Purpose is clearly expressed
Development	Inappropriate response to thesis, or lacks thesis; no topic development	Undeveloped or vague thesis, theme, or topic	Rudimentary development of thesis, theme, or topic; limited in depth or clarity	Good development of thesis, theme, or topic; conclusion is more than a summary	Fully developed thesis, theme, or topic; writer draws a conclusion	Fully developed, original, insightful thesis, theme, or topic, & conclusion
Details	Virtually no relevant details	Few relevant details	Details lack elaboration; important details omitted	Details are adequate & relevant	Details are specific & enhance development	Rich supporting details
Organization	Lacks organization	Unclear organizational strategy	Organizational strategy includes transitions	Logical progression of ideas	Logical & controlled organization from beginning to end; non-formulaic	Writer expresses relationships among ideas; careful & subtle organization
Sentences	Many fragments & run-ons	Poor sentence structure	Complete sentences; some sentence variety	Sentence variety & patterns are appropriate for style & effect	Sentence variety enhances style & effect	Sentence variety enhances style & effect
Word Choice	Extremely limited vocabulary	Limited vocabulary	Appropriate vocabulary	Effective diction	Varied, precise diction	Sophisticated diction
Grammar, Usage, Mechanics	Errors in grammar, usage, & mechanics interfere with communication	Errors in grammar, usage, & mechanics are distracting	Errors in grammar, usage, & mechanics disproportionate to length & complexity of piece	Some errors in grammar, usage, & mechanics	Few errors in grammar, usage & mechanics	Mastery of grammar, usage & mechanics
APA 5 <sup>th</sup> Edition Writing Style, Format, Reference List*	Errors in citations, formatting and writing interfere with communication	Errors in citations, formatting and writing are distracting	Several errors in citations, formatting and writing: errors appear to be careless	Some errors in the application of APA 5 <sup>th</sup> edition	Few to no errors in the application of APA 5 <sup>th</sup> edition format and reference list	Mastery of all applicable APA 5 <sup>th</sup> edition requirements

This rubric has been designed to assist students and instructors in clarifying the strengths and weaknesses in a piece of writing, and to establish standards. Please be aware that writing assignments have requirements that are specific and that the grading of an assignment will take into account not only the strengths and weaknesses of the final written piece, but also whether or not other specified requirements have been met, and to what extent they have been met.

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## APA writing style highlights:

- Cover page (not included in page count) with the following information, centered horizontally and vertically
  - Title of paper
  - Your Name
  - Name of organization (in this case, Plymouth State University)
  - Date paper was completed
- All pages should be double spaced with the first line indented ½ inch
- Font: 12 point Times New Roman
- References on a separate page at the end of the document (not counted in page count) with the following formatting
  - The word “References” centered at the top of the page
  - References listed alphabetically
  - All double-spaced with the carryover line indented ½ inch
  - General format: Author’s last name, first initial. (date). Title of article. *Journal title (vol.)* No. pages, URL if obtained from the internet.
  - Use references from this syllabus as a guideline.