Writing Placement Scoring Guide

Some factors to consider when scoring a timed exam: 1) writers have little to no time to revise so these are first drafts; 2) placements can and do vary from scorer to scorer; 3) scores can reflect factors not related to content knowledge like handwriting; 4) the English classes are process oriented emphasizing revision which doesn’t occur on timed exams; 5) unlike the work from a class, this assessment is predictive of what a writer could do after a semester of instruction.

The 6 writing criteria for on-topic papers are:

1. Responds to the topic (briefly summarizes and agrees or disagrees)
2. Understanding and appropriate use of quotation/paraphrase from the passage
3. Criticality and clarity of thought
4. Organization, development, and support
5. Syntax and command of language
6. Grammar, usage, and mechanics

Note: Suggested page lengths are general guidelines only. An outstanding 2 page paper could be WITDA and a vague, weak, and wandering 6 page paper Developmental II.

ENGL 107 Writing in the Digital Age (in general, a paper will be 3-6 double-spaced pages)

Strong WITDA—overall superior writing/thinking but may have minor flaws. (May be eligible for Honors.)
A typical essay in this category:
- Addresses the topic clearly and responds effectively to all aspects of the task.
- Demonstrates a thorough critical understanding of the passage in developing an insightful response.
- Explores the issues thoughtfully and in depth.
- Is well organized and developed, with ideas supported by examples from experience and the text.
- Has an effective, fluent style marked by syntactic variety and a clear command of language.
- Is generally free from errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Average WITDA—demonstrates clear competence in writing/thinking. It may have some errors, but they are not serious enough to distract or confuse the reader.
A typical essay in this category:
- Addresses the topic clearly, but may respond to some aspects of the tasks more effectively than others.
- Demonstrates mostly sound understanding of the passage in developing a somewhat reasoned response.
- Shows some depth and complexity of thought.
- Is mostly organized and developed though it may occasionally stray, with ideas supported by mostly appropriate reasons and examples.
- Displays some syntactic variety and facility in the use of language.
- May have a few errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics.

Weak WITDA—demonstrates some competence in thinking, but has some writing issues though they are not serious enough to distract or confuse the reader. Student would benefit from additional support.

ENGL 090 Developmental II (in general, paper will be 2-3 pages)

Strong Developmental English II—demonstrates adequate writing/thinking. It may have some errors that distract the reader, but they do not significantly obscure meaning.
A typical essay in this category:
- Addresses the topic, but may slight some aspects of the task.
- Demonstrates a generally accurate understanding of the passage in developing a sensible response.
- May treat the topic simplistically or repetitively.
- Is adequately organized and developed, generally supporting ideas with reasons and examples.
- Demonstrates adequate use of syntax and language.
- May have some errors, but generally demonstrates control of grammar, usage and mechanics.

Average to Weak Developmental English II—demonstrates developing competence, but is flawed in some significant ways.
A typical essay in this category reveals one or more of the following weaknesses:

- Distorts or neglects aspects of the task.
- Demonstrates some understanding of the passage, but may misconstrue parts of it or make limited use of it in developing a weak response.
- Lacks focus, or demonstrates confused or simplistic thinking.
- Is poorly organized and developed, presenting generalizations without adequate and appropriate support or presenting details without generalizations.
- Has limited control of syntax and vocabulary.
- Has an accumulation of errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that sometimes interfere with meaning.

**ENGL 090 LINKED Developmental II**

The Linked Class is designated for non-native speakers of English who would benefit from an art history content-based EFL class to support Introduction to Visual Culture and Modern Art History.

Please refer EPA writing samples to Yael Samuel and Jeanne Willette that demonstrate the characteristics of a Developmental English II two-page essay plus one or more of the following weaknesses:

- Accumulative errors in grammar and usage that interfere with or obscure meaning
- Patterns of incorrect word order
- Patterns of unfinished or fragmented thought
- Writing that appears hindered by limited vocabulary and language control
- Demonstrates some thoughtfulness and criticality in the attempt to respond to the prompt

**ENGL 050 Developmental I (in general, paper will be 1-2 pages)**

**Developmental English I**—is seriously flawed.

A typical essay in this category reveals one or more of the following weaknesses:

- Indicates confusion about the topic or neglects important aspects of the task.
- Demonstrates very poor understanding of the main points of the passage, does not use the passage appropriately in developing a response, or may not use the passage at all.
- Lacks focus and coherence, and often fails to communicate its ideas.
- Has very weak organization and development, providing simplistic generalizations without support.
- Has inadequate control of syntax and vocabulary.
- Is marred by numerous errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that frequently interfere with meaning.

**ENGL 020 EFL (in general, paper will be 1 page)**

**EFL**—not competent in language

A typical essay in this category reveals one or more of the following weaknesses:

- Suggests an inability to comprehend the question or to respond meaningfully to the topic.
- Demonstrates little or no ability to understand the passage or to use it in developing a response.
- Is unfocused, illogical, or incoherent.
- Is disorganized and underdeveloped, providing little or no relevant support.
- Lacks basic control syntax and vocabulary.
- Has serious and persistent errors in grammar, usage, and mechanics that severely interfere with meaning.
- No essay whatsoever.

**Note:** Readers should not penalize an EFL writer excessively for slight shifts in idiom, problems with articles, confusion over prepositions, and occasional misuse of verb tense and verb forms, so long as such features do not obscure meaning.

Updated 7/16/14