

Ten Writing Priorities

THESIS

Does the paper have a message? Is the message worth conveying? Is the message clear to the reader by the time he or she finishes reading the paper? Does every aspect of the paper relate to the main message? Does the paper have a purpose? Does the paper avoid leaving the reader asking, so what?

AUDIENCE

Are the point of view, format, word choice, tone, and style consistent with the needs and expectations of the audience?

GENRE

Does the paper satisfy the conventions of its genre? Does it adhere to the unique qualities of a term paper, summary, review, research report, lab report, etc.? Does the paper satisfy all of the requirements of the assignment—length, subject, use of sources, etc.?

SUPPORT

Does the paper make clear distinctions between assertion, evidence, and analysis? Is there sufficient evidence? Is there a sufficient variety of support from categories such as facts, statistics, examples, anecdotes, quotations, illustrations, interviews, polls, etc.? Is the evidence persuasive? Is the evidence properly cited?

ORGANIZATION

Is there an introduction, body, and conclusion? Are paragraphs cohesive? Do they have topic sentences? Are paragraphs ordered logically? Do transitions signal relationships behind ideas? Are all paragraphs important? Does the paper avoid redundancy?

SYNTAX

Do the sentences maintain correct grammatical structure, word order, and verb agreement? Are the paper's sentence structures varied?

DICTION

Is the word choice appropriate for the audience, purpose, message, assignment, and rhetorical stance? Do the words convey meaning accurately and effectively? Is the style clear, authentic, graceful, and compelling?

STANDARD USAGE

Does the paper use the correct word or phrase at the correct time? i.e., Is the correct homophone used (e.g. dear vs. deer)? Does the language achieve a level of formality appropriate to the paper's genre and audience?

SPELLING & PUNCTUATION

Has the paper been carefully and successfully proofread for proper spelling and punctuation? Is the paper free from errors and typos?

PRESENTATION

Is the paper neatly typed and printed in easy-to-read black ink? Does it feature proper page numbering, margins, and font? Is it presented cleanly and attractively?