## **Trait-Based Rubric for Academic Essays**

CONTENT						
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<b>Topic</b> Focused	Identifies and focuses a topic clearly, and is appropriately specific.	<ul> <li>Identifies and focuses a topic, but may be insufficiently clear or specific.</li> </ul>	Identifies a topic, but may be peripheral, lack focus, and/or too general.	Lacks an identifiable, focused topic.		
Responsive	Provides a complete and thoughtful response to the task.	Addresses key features of the writing task.	Addresses some aspects of the task.	Does not answer the question or substitutes a simpler writing task.		
Thesis  Defensible	Asserts a defensible, thought-provoking claim and shows reasonableness and complexity.	<ul> <li>Asserts a defensible claim, shows reasonableness, but may lack development or complexity.</li> </ul>	Asserts a defensible claim, but may be overly broad, general, or simplistic; may lack development and/or reasonableness.	Asserts the obvious or lacks connection to an issue. May generate a "so what?" response.		
Analytical/ Evaluative	Stance shows analysis, evaluation, and/or synthesis and indicates a clear need to explain, prove, or validate assertion.	<ul> <li>Stance shows analysis, evaluation, and/or synthesis and indicates a clear need to explain, prove, or validate assertion.</li> </ul>	Stance lacks analysis, evaluation, and/or synthesis; may weakly indicate the need to explain, prove, or validate assertion.	May express a vague, general, or undeveloped stance.		
Thought- provoking	Shows originality in viewpoint and/or voice.	<ul> <li>May lack originality in viewpoint and/or voice.</li> </ul>	Minimal originality in viewpoint and/or voice.	Lacks originality in viewpoint and/or voice.		
Global Development & Support	Introduction and conclusion frame and develop the topic and writer's stance.	<ul> <li>Introduction and conclusion contribute to development of topic.</li> </ul>	Has an identifiable introduction and conclusion.	Introduction and/or conclusion may be brief or missing altogether.		
Intro/Concl. Relevance	Chooses relevant evidence for purpose, stance, and audience.	<ul> <li>Offers appropriate support; may use varied forms of evidence.</li> </ul>	May rely on observation or example from source with general, vague, or unreflective inference or opinion.	Offers general support that is unreflective, mainly personal, or vague.		
Progression	Develops a complex view of the topic.	Stays on topic and furthers the discussion.	Inserts occasional information that is tangential or disconnected.	Presents marginal or irrelevant information that is off topic.		
Coherence	Integrates evidence and ideas smoothly.	Links evidence and ideas.	Attempts to connect evidence to ideas but does so partially or inconsistently.	Does not consistently connect evidence to ideas.		
Reasoning	Develops a complete reasoning pathway that contains logical follow through, considers multiple points of view, and examines assumptions.	Develops a logical reasoning pathway with minor gaps or leaps while addressing other points of view.	May contain some gaps in reasoning pathway; deals minimally with other points of view.	Contains gaps and/or leaps in development and does not examine other points of view.		
Paragraph Organization Connected	Has clear progression of ideas that develops point(s) through well- connected sentences (transition words, topic)	Is marked by appropriate progression with an occasional gap in sentence connections.	Has identifiable progression marked by wandering and/or some disconnected sentences.	Has unclear and confusing progression and/or frequent disconnected sentences.		
Detailed	sentences, etc.).  • Details proficiently support the paragraph topic.	<ul> <li>Details adequately support the paragraph topic.</li> </ul>	Provides insufficient detail to support paragraph topic.	Provides generalities or irrelevant details to support paragraph topic.		
Purposeful	Fulfills an essential function in the development of the whole piece.	<ul> <li>Contributes to the development of the whole piece.</li> </ul>	Does not purposefully contribute to the development of the whole piece.	<ul> <li>Provides marginal or unclear contribution to the development of the whole piece.</li> </ul>		

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Word Choice Varied Specific Accurate	Uses a variety of specific and accurate words as appropriate for the topic.	Shows accurate control of appropriate words, but not as varied or specific as possible.	Features noticeably general words, repetitions, and occasional inaccurate or informal usage.	Contains predominantly general, repetitive, and sometimes inaccurate or informal words (too colloquial).
Sentence Structure  Purposefully Varied	Purposeful and consistent use of a wide variety of sentence types, opening elements, noun modifiers, and adverbial elements.	Purposeful and consistent use of typical sentence types with some variety of sentence openers, noun modifiers, and adverbial elements.	Little variation of sentence types, openers, noun modifiers, and adverbial elements.	Reliance on the most basic sentence types with very little variation of openers, noun modifiers, and adverbial elements.
Accurate	No awkward, ungrammatical, or informal structures within a 2 paragraph / ~300 word section.	No severely awkward, ungrammatical, or informal structures over a 2-paragraph / ~300 word section.	Occasional awkward, ungrammatical, or informal structures over a 2-paragraph / ~300 word section	Frequent awkward, ungrammatical, or informal structures throughout the essay.
Punctuation  Accurate  Varied	Uses a variety of edited English punctuation consistently to enhance meaning and rhetorical effects.	Uses terminal and internal punctuation of edited English consistently though not always for varied rhetorical effect.	Shows inconsistent use of accurate punctuation for edited English.	Contains frequent errors of terminal and internal punctuation.
Voice, Tone, Formality  Appropriate	The use of words, sentences, and punctuation creates a distinct and engaging voice, tone, and level of formality appropriate to audience, purpose, and genre.	The use of words, sentences, and punctuation creates a consistent voice, tone, and level of formality appropriate to audience, purpose, and genre.	The use of words, sentences, and punctuation creates an inconsistent voice, tone, or formality level that is occasionally inappropriate to the situation.	The use of words, sentences, and punctuation shows a lack of awareness of the voice, tone, and formality level expected in academic writing.

DOCUMENTATION							
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Conventions	Displays a variety of correct in-text citations.	Demonstrates correct in-text citation format.	Contains in-text citations.	Lacks in-text citations.			
Varied Correct	Complete, correct references.	Complete, correct references.	References are always present though they may be incorrect.	References sources, though with incomplete or imperfect formatting.			
Integrating  Context	Selects and contextualizes sources to integrate smoothly with own ideas and writing style.	Offers context for the source with occasional awkward integration.	Differentiates between source and own ideas but without sufficient context or integration.	Does not differentiate sources from own ideas or omits use of sources.			
Signaling	Signals all sources, with a variety of signaling.	Signals all sources, but may lack signaling variety.	Includes occasional signal phrasing.	Lacks signal phrasing.			
Variety	Uses summary, paraphrase, and quotation as rhetorical needs dictate.	Uses quotations along with a balance of summary and paraphrase.	Lacks balance of summary, paraphrase, and quotation.	<ul> <li>Excessive quotation; inaccurate or minimal use of summary and paraphrase.</li> </ul>			

WOU First Year Writing

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