

University of Baltimore
Upper Division Writing Placement - Scoring Guide

Essays are read and evaluated by two Writing Program faculty members. Each reader scores the essay on a scale of 1 to 6, and the two scores are combined. 12 is the highest possible total score. A score of 8 or above constitutes a WRIT 300 placement. A score of 7 or below constitutes a WRIT 200 placement.

Superior (6)

A **Superior** paper addresses the topic in a complex, meaningful way, and executes its plan convincingly and skillfully.

- **Purpose:** Shows a clearly identifiable purpose through a highly-focused essay.
- **Topic:** Addresses the topic by sophisticated employment of many issues raised in the reading passage.
- **Critical Thinking and Logic:** Evaluates the validity of the reading's conclusions, and synthesizes information pertinent to the topic, and/or offers an alternative interpretation of the topic.
- **Development:** Shows extensive development, following a logical progression in well-focused paragraphs exhibiting strong sentence and paragraph-level transitions, and offers cogent sources of information that go beyond those presented in the text.
- **Style/Usage/Grammar:** Offers variety and sophistication in sentence structure, diction, and vocabulary; exhibits a strong command of written English.
- **Reflection:** Insightfully analyzes reading, writing and thinking processes; proposes at least three important revisions.

Above Average (5)

An **Above Average** paper addresses the topic in a meaningful way, and executes its plan skillfully.

- **Purpose:** Shows a clearly identifiable purpose.
- **Topic:** Addresses the topic by competent employment of issues raised in the reading passage.
- **Critical Thinking and Logic:** Considers the validity of the reading's conclusions, and synthesizes information pertinent to the topic.
- **Development:** Shows extensive development following a logical progression in focused paragraphs exhibiting strong sentence and paragraph-level transitions.
- **Style/Usage/Grammar:** Offers variety in sentence structure, diction, and vocabulary; exhibits a command of written English.
- **Reflection:** Analyzes and reflects on reading, writing and thinking processes; proposes at least two important revisions.

Average (4)

An **Average** paper somewhat addresses the topic and executes its plan.

- **Purpose:** Shows an identifiable purpose.
- **Topic:** Has engaged the primary issue raised by the reading passage.
- **Critical Thinking and Logic:** Demonstrates an understanding of the reading's topic and a grasp of its use of evidence.
- **Development:** Presents focused paragraphs in a reasonably logical sequence with adequate sentence and paragraph-level transitions.
- **Style/Usage/Grammar:** Employs adequate use of sentence structure and vocabulary; exhibits control of written English, and while the essay may contain some grammatical flaws, they do not detract from the overall effect or clarity of the writing.

- **Reflection:** Inconsistently analyzes and reflects on their reading, writing, and thinking processes; proposes at least one important revision.

Below Average (3)

A **Below Average** paper fails to develop or address the issue adequately.

- **Purpose:** Shows little purpose.
- **Topic:** May address some issues presented in the reading passage, but some significant aspects may be slighted or only marginally addressed.
- **Critical Thinking and Logic:** Fails to adequately address the reading and develops no relevant points of its own.
- **Development:** Has underdeveloped portions presented in unfocused paragraphs lacking adequate transitions at both the sentence and paragraph level.
- **Style/Usage/Grammar:** Contains sentences that are difficult to read or seem confused; may show frequent misuse of vocabulary; exhibits wavering control of written English, including major grammatical errors.
- **Reflection:** Poorly analyzes and reflects on their reading, writing, and thinking processes; proposes no important revisions.

Inferior (2)

An **Inferior** paper fails to develop or address the issue at all and reveals serious and repeated problems, including confusion as to the task.

- **Purpose:** Lacks apparent purpose.
- **Topic:** Fails to address the issues presented in the reading passage.
- **Critical Thinking and Logic:** Fails to understand the reading.
- **Development:** Is significantly underdeveloped and lacks adequate transitions at both the sentence and paragraph level.
- **Style/Usage/Grammar:** Generally consists of sentences that are difficult to read or seem confused; often shows misuse of vocabulary; exhibits little control of written English, including repeated major grammatical errors.
- **Reflection:** Fails to analyze and reflect on their reading, writing, and thinking processes; proposes no revisions.

Incomplete (1)

An **Incomplete** paper presents too little writing for evaluation. It may be a blank paper or one containing only a few sentences.