

BENCHMARKS for WRITING, CRITICAL THINKING AND INFORMATION LITERACY SKILL IN GENERAL EDUCATION COURSES

Benchmarks per outcome

Proficiency	Learning Outcome	Benchmark for Level I courses (1st year)	Benchmark Level II courses (2nd year)
	Students will compose essays such as:	Personal narratives/reflections, summary and response and critical analysis	Reports, summary and response and researched critical analysis including an argument
Writing skills	Context of and purpose for writing (Level I and Level II)	Demonstrate an understanding of context, audience, and purpose	Demonstrate an understanding of context, audience, and purpose
	Thesis (Level I and Level II)	Thesis is a statement (main idea) OR Thesis is clearly stated	Thesis is an arguable position OR Thesis is defended with argument
	Sources and Evidence (Level I and Level II)	Provide credible, relevant evidence in support of the thesis	Provide credible, relevant evidence in support of the thesis
	Structure and Organization (Level I and Level II)	Follow structure for summary and response, description, or critical analysis	Follow structure for researched argumentative critical analysis (often done through comparison and contrast)
	Control of Syntax and Mechanics (Level I and Level II)	Use appropriate language that conveys meaning and is grammatically correct	Use appropriate language that conveys meaning and is grammatically correct
Critical Thinking skills	Explanation of issues (Level I and Level II)	Clearly state issue/problem	Clearly state issue/problem delivering relevant information
	Analysis/synthesis of evidence (Level I and Level II)	Analyze and/or synthesize evidence derived from appropriate sources	Analyze and/or synthesize evidence derived from appropriate sources
	Context & Assumptions (Level II, optional)	N/A	Analyze own and others' assumptions (optional, depends on class)
	Student's Position (Level II)	N/A	Formulate and argue a clear position on an issue taking into account different points of view
	Conclusions (Level I and Level II)	Develop logical conclusions based on evidence	Develop logical conclusions based on evidence taking into account opposing arguments
Information Literacy skills	Understand info needs/ search efficiently (Level I and Level II)	Guided research (sources provided, search for info done within the assigned text); additional research optional)	Either guided research (with assigned texts) or students search for sources
	Evaluate info sources (as appropriate to the discipline Level I and Level II)	Demonstrate an understanding of scholarly sources	Understand and review information sources, consider if amount of information is sufficient to address the issue
	Articulate credibility of sources (as appropriate to the discipline Level I and Level II)	Mention one aspect of source credibility or as appropriate to the discipline	As appropriate to the discipline
	Use info ethically (Level I and Level II)	Acknowledge sources and cite; Understand what plagiarism is; No plagiarism	Acknowledge sources and cite accurately; No plagiarism

Level I: FIQWS/ENGL 110, AES 232, 242, ART 100, MUC 101, 102, 145, THTR 131, ANTH 101, ASIA 101, 202, 205, BLST 102, CLSS 321, WCIV, HIST 204, 206, ANTH 201, ECO 102, JWST 104, PSY 102, SOC 105, WS 100, MED 100, PSC 101, USSO, HIST 240, 241

Level II: ENGL 210, WHUM, THTR 211, 212, 213, FREN 283, SPAN 281, 283, JWST 117, PHIL 102, 112, 201, 206, 308, 308, 322, 337, 349, PSC 124

Benchmarks per Level

Level I courses reinforce skills students learn in FIQWS/ENGL 110; Students will compose essays such as personal narratives/reflections, summary and response, and critical analysis accomplishing the following:

Writing: 70% of students will reach Milestone 1 (score 2)

- Present Context of and state purpose for writing
- Develop appropriately organized essay containing a clear thesis statement and credible, relevant evidence
- Use appropriate language that conveys meaning and is grammatically correct

Critical Thinking: 60% of students will reach Milestone 1 (score 2)

- Clearly state issue/problem
- Analyze and/or synthesize evidence derived from appropriate sources
- Develop logical conclusions based on evidence

Information Literacy: 60% of students will reach Milestone 1 (score 2)

- demonstrate a clear understanding of information needs and ability to search efficiently (within assigned texts and/or by source search)
- Demonstrate an understanding of scholarly sources (library visit)
- Articulate credibility of sources or as appropriate to the discipline
- Use information ethically by citing sources and not plagiarizing

Level II courses build upon skills students learn in FIQWS/ENGL 110 and reinforce skills students learn in ENGL 210; Students will compose essays such as reports, summary and response, and researched critical analysis including an argument accomplishing the following:

Writing: 75% of students will reach Milestone 1 (score 2) and 20% will reach Milestone 2

- Present context of and state purpose for writing
- Develop appropriately organized essay containing a clear thesis statement (argument) and credible, relevant evidence
- Use appropriate language that conveys meaning and is grammatically correct

Critical Thinking: 70% of students will reach Milestone 1 (score 2) and 20% will reach Milestone 2

- Clearly state issue/problem delivering relevant information
- Formulate and argue a clear position on the issue taking into account different points of view
- Analyze and/or synthesize evidence derived from appropriate sources
- Analyze own and others' assumptions (*optional, depends on class*)
- Develop logical conclusions based on evidence taking into account opposing points of view

Information Literacy: 70% of students will reach Milestone 1 (score 2)

- Demonstrate a clear understanding of information needs and ability to search efficiently (either within assigned texts or by source search)
- Understand and review information sources, consider if amount of information is sufficient to address the issue
- Articulate credibility of sources (as appropriate to the discipline)
- Use information ethically by citing sources and not plagiarizing

