Information Literacy in Student Writing and Research Rubric
California State University, Los Angeles

The *Information Literacy in Student Writing and Research Rubric* is a tool for evaluating evidence of information literacy skills in written student work. The rubric is best suited to research projects that include searching for and using information resources beyond those assigned in class. Typically, more than one external source is required to demonstrate information literacy skills. Lab reports, data analysis, or observation reports are not well suited for scoring unless they require using additional information resources to engage with the research. Creative writing or personal reflections are likewise unsuitable for use with the rubric.

Bulleted criteria in each cell are not exhaustive and do not have to be satisfied in total to warrant a particular score. Rather, they provide context for deciding on a score.

Although the manner in which students convey their ideas and thoughts in writing is important, the rubric is intended primarily for the evaluation of information literacy rather than the assessment of writing skills.

Information Literacy Evaluation Categories:

Strategic Inquiry: How well does the student set up a researchable or investigable topic, and scope (i.e., extent) of inquiry?

Evaluation of Sources: How sophisticated are the student's abilities to select appropriate sources?

Use of Evidence: How effectively does the student deploy evidence to support and/or contextualize claims?

Attribution of Evidence: How clearly does the student attribute the work of others in a style appropriate to the discipline?

The rubric score levels: Advanced = 4; Developed = 3; Evolving = 2; Beginning = 1; No Evidence of Skill= 0.

July 2021. Rubric adapted by Kimberly Y. Franklin and Kendall Faulkner from Gould Library Reference and Instruction Department, "Information Literacy in Student Writing Rubric," Northfield, MN: Carleton College. 2017. http://go.carleton.edu/ilsw

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Advanced 4	Developed 3	Evolving 2	Beginning 1*
Strategic Inquiry: How well does the student set up a researchable or investigable topic, and scope (i.e., extent) of inquiry?			
Topic and scope of inquiry are clear and well-matched with the discipline and evidence at hand, without any tangents • Well-formed research question, hypothesis, or thesis statement • Clear and strong engagement or curiosity in the topic • Follows through on all goals • Clear and strong evidence of the significance of the topic	**Consistent and appropriate topic and scope of inquiry, though with a few tangents (e.g., going off-topic or out of scope)** • Stays on topic, though the thesis or argument may not be fully formed • Engagement or curiosity in the topic is evident, but tangents interfere with prioritization of interest • Follows through on most goals • Evidence of the significance of the topic	**Inconsistently defined topic/question and scope of inquiry** • Defines a researchable or investigable topic, but goes outside the scope of inquiry • Minimal engagement or curiosity in the topic • Project goals and paper genre are stated but no follow-through on goals • Minimal evidence of the significance of the topic	**Topic/question and scope of inquiry are poorly defined** • Poses a question or topic (too broad or too narrow) that cannot be researched or investigated with the resources available • Very little engagement or curiosity in the topic • Project goals are not stated, nor does the paper follow the flow of a topic • States the topic, but without evidence of the significance of the topic
Evaluation of Sources: How sophisticated are the student's abilities to select appropriate sources?			
Sources match goals (e.g., question, hypothesis, thesis), demonstrating thought about source collection, evaluation, and/or selection • Demonstrates critical thinking about the credibility and authority of sources • Selects appropriate sources to support or contextualize all claims • Knows when enough information has been obtained to complete the task • Demonstrates an understanding of the differences between primary/secondary and scholarly/popular sources and their uses	**Generally, employs appropriate sources, though may miss some obvious avenues for exploration and analysis** • Sources are generally credible and authoritative, though writing may lack evidence of critical thinking about the sources • Few sources are collected purely out of convenience and not for relevance and appropriateness to the topic and project goals • Considers and pursues a range of possibilities for finding information • Uses scholarly (primary or secondary) sources appropriate to the question/topic	**Misses obvious avenues of exploration, or employs some sources clearly selected out of convenience** • Inconsistent application of standards for credibility, authority, and appropriateness • Many sources collected purely out of convenience and not for relevance and appropriateness to the topic and project goals • Identifies information resources, but misses some obvious needs • Uses authoritative, but not relevant, primary / secondary sources	**Sources are inappropriate or do not contribute to goals (e.g., question, hypothesis, thesis)** • Few cues that signal the credibility, authority, and appropriateness of the sources selected • Sources are inappropriate to the subject matter, indicating a misunderstanding of the sources or topic matter • Identifies information resources, but only the most obvious • Relies on only one kind of source (primary/ secondary), or only on popular sources when others are needed

**If no evidence of the skill is visible, a score of zero may be applied.*

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Advanced 4	Developed 3	Evolving 2	Beginning 1*
Use of Evidence: How effectively does the student deploy evidence to support and/or contextualize claims?			
Evidence is integrated, synthesized, and contextualized to support claims • All claims are consistently supported or contextualized by evidence • All evidenced is used and obtained ethically • Student integrates their own ideas with the ideas of others, avoiding patch writing and under/over citation • Draws reasonable and convincing conclusions based on the evidence	**Generally, employs evidence to support rhetorical goals** • Claims are generally supported or contextualized by evidence with few missteps • Accurately and ethically represents most of the information used • Evidence from sources are contextualized to accomplish rhetorical goals • Draws conclusions but might not take all evidence into account	**Evidence used is not contextualized and synthesized to support claims** • Student presents their own ideas but does not contextualize them within the evidence • Inconsistent application of information ethics in support of claims • Exhibits "patch writing," taking information out of context without considering sources in their entirety • Evidence is somewhat related to the argument or thesis but not contextualized or synthesized	**Evidence is used, but might not support claims made throughout the narrative** • Student relies on own ideas as evidence, without consultation of other sources; might assume that information is common knowledge when it may not be • Unaware of the ethical issues in obtaining and using information • Evidenced used is misleading, or cherry-picked • Evidence used does not relate to the argument or thesis
****Attribution of Evidence:** How clearly does the student attribute the work of others in a style appropriate to the discipline?			
Sources are documented consistently and completely giving a clear distinction between the student's ideas and those of others • Gives attribution when using the words and ideas of others • Citation method consistent throughout the paper and appropriate to the genre	**Good attribution practices with few inconsistencies, though may miss some opportunities to attribute others' ideas** • Demonstrates an understanding of how, why, and when to cite sources; few instances of unsubstantiated claims without cited evidence • Few instances of missing or inconsistent citations in text or in the bibliography	**Source are consulted, but with some missteps in attribution that interfere with reader's ability to interpret claims** • Misunderstandings about when and how to cite ideas of others • Citation method inconsistent throughout the paper and not appropriate for the discipline/genre	**Source are consulted, although distinction between student's and others' ideas is difficult to determine** • Rarely gives attribution when using the words and ideas of others • Citation method or format interfere with identification or understanding sources; may use only URLS or mentions of a source to cite

**If no evidence of the skill is visible, a score of zero may be applied.*

**Please keep in mind that the citation style used may be unfamiliar to the evaluator, and some instructors give students flexibility in how to cite sources. Rather than evaluating attribution against a known style, consider evidence of consistency, clarity, and an understanding of when attribution is required, regardless of the citation style used.

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