

# GRADE EXPECTATIONS

## Seven Steps to a Final Draft

### What Teachers Expect From You After WRT 150

**WRT 150** teaches you to find and develop topics, research information and ideas related to your topics, draft and revise essays, seek quality feedback (from classmates, writing consultants from the Meijer Center for Writing, and faculty), document sources, and proofread and edit final drafts. One goal of WRT 150 is to help you develop the ability to guide *yourself* through this process—not just in WRT 150, but also in all of your college courses and beyond.

After WRT 150, some students forget all the hard work involved with producing quality college-level writing. We want you to live up to your WRT 150 grade in all of your other classes.

**WRT 150 grades** are based on the product of lots of hard work—final drafts. If you earn a “B” in WRT 150, we believe you are capable of “good” college-level writing **IF** you work hard at brainstorming, researching, drafting, revising, documenting, and editing your writing. A “B” does not *guarantee* that you will always produce good writing, of course, just as a “B” in Spanish does not guarantee that you will always speak good Spanish.

*You must continue to work hard to produce good writing!*

**Remember:** *First or second drafts will likely earn poor grades. On final due dates, college teachers expect **final drafts**. The same is true of employers: In memos, letters, reports, and other written projects, employers expect **final drafts**. First drafts won't cut it!*

**Set a Timeline.** Whether you have two months or two hours, you should divide your available time and make a plan. Try dividing your time into four equal blocks for planning, drafting, revising, and editing. Conducting research and consulting with others can happen during all four time blocks. Your goal should be to complete a first full draft by the *midpoint* of your allotted time. That will allow time for revising and editing.

**Clarify Your Goals.** Make sure you fully understand the assignment. Talk to people—friends, classmates, professors—about your plans and ideas. Do some background reading and research. Make an appointment with your professor and describe your plans. Are you on the right track?

**Check Your Resources.** If you need to conduct surveys or experiments, contact people for interviews or field work, or do library research, *do it early!* Check the library website for resources related to your course, field, or general subject. Talk to a librarian. Talk to your professor.

**Get a Draft Done Early.** The earlier you complete your first full draft, the more time you'll have to improve that draft by re-thinking, re-researching, re-organizing, and re-wording.

**Visit the Meijer Center for Writing (120 LOH).** The trained consultants can help you at any stage of your writing process—from brainstorming to final editing. You should plan to visit the Center several times for each major writing project. [www.gvsu.edu/wc](http://www.gvsu.edu/wc)

**Check Style and Documentation Requirements.** If your project includes research, you will need to cite and document your sources. Make sure you know which “style sheet” your professor wants you to follow. If you are unsure what constitutes plagiarism, check with your professor.

**Save Time for Final Editing.** This can be the most crucial step. *Follow the suggestions on the back of this sheet.*



**MEIJER CENTER FOR WRITING  
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**GRAND VALLEY STATE UNIVERSITY**



# A Final Checklist: Is Your Paper Ready for Grading?

## Focus and Development:

- Is the topic clearly indicated in the title and opening paragraphs?
- Is there a clear focus, stance, or purpose introduced early on?
- Is the focus maintained throughout the piece of writing? Is the ending focused on the same goal as the beginning?
- Are the main and supporting ideas supported with details, evidence, examples, and explanations?
- Are there lingering questions that have been unanswered, or have all of the loose ends been neatly tied up? Have you satisfied a “critic” of your ideas?

## Organization:

- Is there an overall pattern to the paper? Is that pattern previewed early on so that the reader knows what to expect in the paper?
- Is that pattern clear, sensible, natural? If you made a paragraph-by-paragraph outline of the existing draft, would the outline move along easily and sensibly?
- Do you provide helpful transitions from one part of the paper to the next? How do you do it—with headings? with transition sentences at the beginning of new sections? both?
- Are the individual sections or paragraphs themselves well organized? If you read sections and paragraphs individually, do they read as unified wholes—as mini-papers on a particular topic?

## Style and Expression:

- Does the “voice” behind the writing sound appropriate to the topic, course, and discipline? Does the writing sound smart, educated, well informed, and confident? Are your readers likely to be impressed by your “presence” in the essay?
- Are the sentences smooth, fluid, natural, and varied? Are they easy to read out loud?

## Mechanics:

- Have you run a spell-check of the document? Have you double-checked to make sure all proper nouns and technical terms are spelled correctly and consistently?
- Have you checked each sentence for correctness? Try reading the whole draft backward, sentence by sentence, to allow you to focus on each sentence individually. Check for sentence fragments, comma splices, fused sentences, and mixed constructions.
- Is your grammar correct? Check for subject-verb agreement, pronoun-antecedent agreement, and misplaced or dangling modifiers.
- Have you used commas appropriately? Double-check the most common uses of commas: 1) after introductory phrases, 2) before concluding phrases, 3) around interrupting phrases, 4) before a conjunction joining two independent clauses, and 5) between items in a series.
- Have you checked all of your plurals and possessives for proper use of the apostrophe?
- Have you checked for problems with other forms of punctuation: colons, semi-colons, hyphens, dashes, periods, and question marks?



## Documentation (when appropriate):

- Are outside sources properly introduced, cited, and documented? Have you checked your citations against the guidelines of the particular style sheet your professor wants you to follow (APA, CSE, IEEE, MLA, etc.)? Have you avoided plagiarism?
- Have you placed quotation marks around all phrases and sentences that you have lifted directly from outside sources?
- Have you cited the sources of all ideas and information, including ideas and information that you have paraphrased or summarized from sources?
- Have you correctly formatted all book titles, periodical titles, newspaper titles, website titles, and article titles? Should they be italicized, underlined, or put into quotation marks? Should some words be capitalized?
- Have you correctly formatted the appropriate references list at the end of the paper? Is it properly numbered or alphabetized? Are the entries properly indented? Is the page titled correctly—as “Works Cited,” “References,” “Bibliography,” or whatever is called for in your particular style sheet?

*If you have special troubles with spelling, grammar, punctuation, or documentation, review a good handbook or website:*

**Purdue’s Online Writing Lab (OWL):**

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>

**Punctuation Made Simple:**

<http://chuma.cas.usf.edu/~olson/pms/>

**The Diana Hacker Website:**

<http://dianahacker.com/bedhandbook/>

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