



[collegiatelearningassessment]

COMMON SCORING RUBRIC

In the design of the CLA performance tasks, higher order thinking skills such as critical thinking, analytic reasoning, problem solving and written communication are considered holistically, as an *integrated set of skills*.

I. CRITICAL THINKING, ANALYTIC REASONING, AND PROBLEM SOLVING

We specifically consider the following categories to be important aspects of critical thinking, analytic reasoning, and problem solving:

Evaluation of evidence

How well does the student assess the quality and relevance of evidence, including:

- Determining what information is or is not pertinent to the task at hand;
- Distinguishing between rational claims and emotional ones, fact from opinion;
- Recognizing the ways in which the evidence might be limited or compromised;
- Spotting deception and holes in the arguments of others; and
- Considering all sources of evidence?

Analysis and synthesis of evidence

How well does the student analyze and synthesize data and information, including:

- Presenting his/her own analysis of the data or information (rather than "as is");
- Committing or failing to recognize logical flaws (e.g., distinguishing correlation from causation);
- Breaking down the evidence into its component parts;
- Drawing connections between discrete sources of data and information; and
- Attending to contradictory, inadequate or ambiguous information?

Drawing conclusions

How well does the student form a conclusion from his/her analysis, including:

- Constructing cogent arguments rooted in data/information rather than speculation/opinion;
- Selecting the strongest set of supporting data;
- Prioritizing components of the argument;
- Avoiding overstated or understated conclusions; and
- Identifying holes in the evidence and subsequently suggesting additional information that might resolve the issue?

Acknowledging alternative explanations/viewpoints

How well does the student consider other options and acknowledge that his/her answer is not the only perspective, including:

- Recognizing that the problem is complex with no clear answer;
- Proposing other options and weighing them in the decision;
- Considering all stakeholders or affected parties in suggesting a course of action; and
- Qualifying responses and acknowledging the need for additional information in making an absolute determination?

II. WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

Analytic writing skills invariably depend on clarity of thought. Therefore, analytic writing and critical thinking, analytic reasoning, and problem solving are related skills sets. The CLA performance tasks measure critical thinking by asking students to explain in writing their rationale for various conclusions. In doing so, their performance is dependent on both writing and critical thinking as integrated rather than separate skills. One can evaluate writing performance using holistic scores that consider several aspects of writing depending on the task. The following are illustrations of the types of questions that can be considered in scoring writing on the various tasks.

Presentation

How clear and concise is the argument? Does the student...

- Clearly articulate the argument and the context for that argument?
- Correctly and precisely use evidence to defend the argument?
- Comprehensibly and coherently present evidence?
- Cite sources correctly and consistently?

Development

How effective is the structure? Does the student...

- Logically and cohesively organize the argument?
- Avoid extraneous elements in the argument's development?
- Present evidence in an order that contributes to a persuasive and coherent argument?

Persuasiveness

How well does the student defend the argument? Does the student...

- Effectively present evidence in support of the argument?
- Draw thoroughly and extensively from the available range of evidence?
- Analyze the evidence in addition to simply presenting it?
- Consider counter-arguments and address weaknesses in his/her own argument?

Mechanics

What is the quality of the student's writing? Does the student...

- Use vocabulary and punctuation correctly? effectively?
- Demonstrate a strong understanding of grammar?
- Use sentence structure that is basic, or more complex and creative?
- Use proper transitions?
- Structure paragraphs logically and effectively?

Interest

How well does the student maintain the reader's interest? Does the student...

- Use creative and engaging examples or descriptions?
- Structure syntax and organization add to the interest of their writing?
- Use colorful but relevant metaphors, similes etc.?
- Craft writing that engages the reader?
- Use writing that leaves the reader thinking?