Performing a Writing Self-Assessment

Use these questions to find out what works in your writing, and what needs to be improved. You can use these questions to revise a draft in progress, or to take a look at a collection of your writing.

The questions are broken down into five categories:

1. Intentions
2. Focus
3. Development
4. Organization
5. Style & Mechanics.

When answering the questions, look for both weaknesses and strengths. Be critical, but remember to give yourself credit for what’s working well.

Assessing Intentions

• Why am I writing?
• Who are my readers? What key characteristics are important?
• What is my main point?
• What do I want readers to do/believe as a result of reading this?
• What general strategy am I taking?
• What role am I assuming?

Assessing Writing

Focus
• Where do I make central points or questions clear to readers?
• How is each section/paragraph related to the central point?

Development
• Will readers understand/believe points or do I need additional definitions, evidence, or reasoning?
• Where might the readers raise questions or challenges? Have I addressed them?

Organization
• What is the general pattern of organization?
• How are ideas grouped?
• At any point does the organization become unclear?

Style and Mechanics
• Is the tone appropriate for my purpose/audience?
• What sentences seem most effective?
• What sentences could use most work?
• Are there persistent grammatical/mechanical problems or questions?