

### Worksheet: The 5 Essentials for Good Writing

Use this worksheet to evaluate your non-fiction writing, including blog posts, articles, or essays.

<b>PURPOSE:</b> What need is your writing fulfilling?		
<i>Information</i>	<i>Persuasion</i>	<i>Entertainment</i>
You're writing to inform your readers about a person, place, or thing (e.g. event or idea).	You're writing to persuade your readers to accept a particular point of view or opinion.	You're writing to provoke emotional responses (e.g. amusement) in your readers.

<b>EFFICACY:</b> What is the intended effect of your writing?		
<i>Intellectual Response</i>	<i>Emotional Response</i>	<i>Action</i>
You want your audience to assess your ideas and supporting details (e.g. agree with your assessment of a news story).	You want your audience to feel something about what you wrote (e.g. amusement, anger, sympathy, or sadness).	You want your audience to do something after they finish reading what you wrote (e.g. donate to a charity or buy your product).

<b>ORGANIZATION:</b> Is your writing structured, fluid, and free from repetition?		
<i>Structure</i>	<i>Fluidity</i>	<i>Repetition</i>
You've arranged your writing to progressively develop your main idea and supporting details.	Your sentences, paragraphs, and sections connect to each other and to the main idea of your writing.	You introduce ideas and details only once, and when you bring them up again, you're <i>developing</i> the content.
Tip: Introduce your main idea early, include supporting details in the middle, and conclude with a summary or call to action.	Tip: Use linking words or phrases to connect paragraphs (e.g. "The first step in the process is," "The second step in the process is").	Tip: Search for words or phrases in your document to see how many times they appear. Revise or eliminate repetitious phrasing.

<b>CLARITY:</b> Is your writing concise, precise, and descriptive?		
<i>Concision</i>	<i>Precision</i>	<i>Description</i>
<p>You've used only as many words as necessary to discuss your main idea and supporting details.</p> <p>Tip: Keep the average sentence at 15-25 words in length.</p>	<p>You've used words that convey your exact, intended meaning.</p> <p>Tip: Ensure every pronoun clearly links to its antecedent (i.e., the noun you're referring to with the pronoun).</p>	<p>You've included words that are specific and informative.</p> <p>Tip: Use strong nouns and adjectives (e.g. "Researcher Sally Smith" vs. "Biologist Sally Smith").</p>

<b>MINDFULNESS:</b> Are the tone, point of view, and content appropriate for both your writing and audience?		
<i>Audience</i>	<i>Tone &amp; Point of View</i>	<i>Content</i>
<p>You've identified the intended audience for your writing.</p> <p>Tip: Ask yourself who the "average" reader in your audience would be (e.g. "What is their gender, age, occupation, education level?" or "Are they novices or experts?")</p>	<p>You've used a tone and point of view that will affirm your expertise while still engaging your intended readers in the text.</p> <p>Tip: Eliminate slang or colloquial words or phrases to achieve a more authoritative tone.</p>	<p>You've included information that supports your main idea and that your intended audience can understand.</p> <p>Tip: Remove "trendy" jokes or references that may only appeal to a specific group for a specific time.</p>

**Notes:**

1. I suggest choosing a *primary* purpose for every piece of writing. You could absolutely write an informative article that is also entertaining, but your primary focus would be to *inform* your readers.
2. Similar to purpose, I suggest choosing a *primary* intended effect for every piece of writing. If you want your readers to donate to your charity, you can appeal to their emotions, but you primarily want them to *act* on what you're saying.