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|  | Capstone (4) | Milestone (3) | Milestone (2) | Benchmark (1) |
| **Writing purpose and thesis** | Demonstrates a thorough understanding of context, audience, and purpose that is responsive to the assigned task(s) and focuses all elements of the work. A specific, sophisticated thesis is clearly articulated or implied. | Demonstrates adequate consideration of context, audience, and purpose and a clear focus. Thesis is clearly communicated. | Demonstrates some awareness of context and purpose; begins to show awareness of audience's perceptions and assumptions. Thesis is simplistic and obvious. | Demonstrates minimal attention to context, audience, purpose, and to the assigned tasks(s). Thesis is an overgeneralization, unclear, or absent from the paper. |
| **Content development** | Uses appropriate, relevant, and  compelling content to illustrate mastery  of the subject, conveying the writer's  understanding, and shaping the whole  work. | Uses appropriate, relevant, and  compelling content to explore ideas  within the context of the discipline and shape the whole work. | Uses adequate and relevant content to develop and explore ideas through most of the work. | Content is insufficient to develop meaning or convey understanding. |
| |  | | --- | | **Explanation of issues** | | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated clearly and described comprehensively, delivering all relevant information necessary for full understanding. | |  | | --- | | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated, described, and clarified so that understanding is not seriously impeded by omissions. | | |  | | --- | | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated but description leaves some terms undefined, ambiguities unexplored, boundaries undetermined, and/or backgrounds unknown. Ideas remain too general to be meaningful. | | Issue/problem to be considered critically is stated without clarification or description. |
| |  | | --- | | **Supporting Evidence** | | |  | | --- | | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation for a comprehensive analysis or synthesis. | | |  | | --- | | Information is taken from source(s) with enough interpretation/evaluation for a coherent analysis or synthesis. | | |  | | --- | | Information is taken from source(s) with some interpretation/evaluation, but not enough for a coherent analysis or synthesis. | | Information is taken from source(s), but there is either a lack of interpretation/evaluation, or the interpretation is erroneous, illogical, unrelated, or speculative. |
| **Effective use of information from sources to accomplish a specific purpose** | Communicates, organizes and synthesizes  information from sources to fully achieve a specific purpose, with clarity and depth | Communicates, organizes and synthesizes information from sources. Intended purpose is achieved. | Communicates and organizes information from sources. The information is not yet synthesized, so the intended purpose is not fully achieved. | Communicates information from sources. The information is fragmented and/or used inappropriately (misquoted, taken out of context, or incorrectly paraphrased, etc.), so the intended purpose is not achieved. |
| **Conclusions and related outcomes (implications and consequences)** | States a conclusion that is logically deduced from the analysis and shows a sophisticated comprehension of the subject. | Conclusion is logically tied to the evidence presented. | Conclusion is a summary or restatement of the opening paragraph. It may or may not flow logically from the evidence. | Conclusion is inconsistent with or an oversimplification of the evidence. |
| **Genre and disciplinary conventions** | Demonstrates detailed attention to and successful execution of a wide range of conventions particular to the discipline and/or writing task (s) including organization, content, presentation, formatting, and stylistic choices | Demonstrates consistent use of important conventions particular to the discipline and/or writing task(s), including organization, content, presentation, and stylistic choices | Follows expectations appropriate to the discipline and/or writing task(s) for basic organization, content, and presentation | Attempts to use a consistent system for basic organization and presentation. |
| **Control of syntax and mechanics** | Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free. | Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language has few errors. | Uses language that generally conveys meaning to readers with clarity, although writing may include some errors. | Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage. |
| **Ethical and legal use of information sources** | The following information use strategies are used correctly all the time: use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; use of information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution). | The following information use strategies are used correctly *most* of the time: use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; use of information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution). | At least two of the following information use strategies are used correctly *most* of the time: use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; use of information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution). | The following information use strategies are either not used correctly or effectively: use of citations and references; choice of paraphrasing, summary, or quoting; use of information in ways that are true to original context; distinguishing between common knowledge and ideas requiring attribution). |