Assess Yourself as a Writer

While external feedback is important to developing new knowledge and skills, self-assessment can also help you become more aware of your writing strengths and challenges, as well as give you a tool to measure your progress. It can be challenging to know what to consider when trying to assess your own writing skills and process, but as a starting point, please try the exercises below.

**Writing Skills Evaluation[[1]](#footnote-1)**

Using a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 identifying a skill you lack and 10 identifying a skill in which you excel, evaluate your writing skills:

* I am able to synthesize large amounts of research to determine the broader perspective on the topic.
* I critique research to see where there may be gaps in the author’s logic or flaws in the reasoning.
* I identify significant connections between ideas that may not be obvious to someone who is unfamiliar with the topic.
* I write the introduction so the reader understands my topic and why it matters.
* I clearly articulate a thesis statement or research questions.
* I write clear transition sentences to connect sections of my document.
* I write accurate analyses of research in clear, easy-to-understand language.
* I use transition words (e.g., “however” or “in addition”) to show the relationship between ideas.
* I vary sentence length, using short sentences as well as longer ones, to keep my reader’s attention.
* I write in active voice rather than passive voice when active voice is more precise.

Notice which individual items you rated as fairly high, which point to your strengths, as well as the items to which you gave a lower score. Those point to areas where you could build new skills.

**Writing Process Evaluation[[2]](#footnote-2)**

Rate the following 10 items on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 meaning this item is never part of your writing process and 10 meaning it is always part of your process:

* I stop researching and begin writing, even if I don’t feel completely ready.
* I schedule time to work on my project, rather than trying to steal time away from other activities.
* As much as possible, I concentrate on my writing during the times of day when I’m likely to be the most focused and creative (e.g., morning people write first thing in the morning).
* I take frequent breaks when I write for a long period of time.
* I don’t harshly criticize myself if I miss a scheduled writing time.
* I give myself small rewards when I stick to my planned writing schedule.
* My first drafts may have some errors and I don't try to perfect every paragraph before moving on.
* When I’m stuck in my writing, I use techniques to help me generate ideas (e.g., returning to my document plan, free-writing, brainstorming, talking out ideas with someone else)
* I understand that producing a polished document requires revising and working through multiple drafts.
* I am comfortable sharing drafts with and getting feedback from other people.

Again, notice the items that you rated highly and those you gave a low rating. The higher-rated items point to the strengths you perceive in your writing process, while the lower rated items suggest steps to consider including in your writing process.

If you’d like information or assistance with any of the skills or processes noted in these exercises, please [contact the Writing Centre](http://writeanswers.royalroads.ca) so that we may assist you!

Reference

Benson Brown, A. (2015, April 23). How to honestly assess your writing [Blog post]. Retrieved from https://www.academiccoachingandwriting.org/academic-writing/academic-writing-blog/vi-how-to-assess-your-writing

1. From “How to Honestly Assess Your Writing,” by A. Benson Brown, 2015. Copyright 2015 by Academic Coaching & Writing LLC. Adapted with permission. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. From “How to Honestly Assess Your Writing,” by A. Benson Brown, 2015. Copyright 2015 by Academic Coaching & Writing LLC. Adapted with permission. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)