Guiding Questions on Writing Concerns

**Structure and Organization**

* Does the writing suggest that the author planned the document before writing the draft?
* Is the paper organized such that the reader can easily follow the structure e.g., introduction that presents context and the thesis statement, body paragraphs with a strong internal structure (e.g., topic sentence that presents the argument for the paragraph, evidence, analysis of how the evidence supports the argument, conclusion, and transition), and a conclusion?
* Are the paragraphs in a logical order?

**Introductory Paragraph(s)**

* Is the central topic of the work clear?
* Does the introduction start by identifying the central topic of the work to provide contextual details for the reader, such as the importance or relevance of the topic?
* Is there a thesis statement at the end of the introduction that clearly states the specific purpose of the work in one or two sentences?
* Does the thesis statement align with the assignment instructions?

**Body Paragraphs**

**Topic Sentences**

* Is there a clear connection between the topic sentence of each paragraph and the thesis statement?
* Does the topic sentence present the claim or argument that will be the focus of the paragraph?
* Does the topic sentence reflect the focus of the paragraph? Is there a disconnection between the topic sentence and the rest of the paragraph?

**Evidence**

* Are there appropriate examples or evidence to support the argument presented in each paragraph?
* Are the sources of the evidence appropriate for the assignment e.g., scholarly versus popular sources?
* Is there sufficient diversity of resources?
* Has the author presented quotations with signal phrases that indicate how the quotation is relevant to the discussion, versus quotations acting as stand-alone sentences?

**Analysis**

* Has the author explained how the quotation or paraphrase supports the argument, versus assuming the reader will understand the connection?
* Are the connections between claim and the evidence in the paragraph sufficiently clear that the paragraph presents a full discussion of a topic, versus being a list of details?

**Concluding Sentences**

* Is there a concluding sentence in each body paragraph that wraps up the discussion within the paragraph and reminds the reader of the connection between the paragraph’s focus and the thesis statement?

**Transitional Sentences**

* Does each body paragraph include a transitional phrase or sentence that helps the reader to move to the next paragraph?

**Concluding Paragraph(s)**

* Does the conclusion finish the paper by reminding the reader that the author proved the thesis statement through the logical analysis of the evidence?
* Has the author introduced new information into the conclusion? If so, is there a direct connection between the information and the rest of the work e.g., providing recommendations for future research?
* Does the conclusion remind the reader of the important details of the work?

**Style**

* Is the tone and style of the writing appropriate for the direct and/or implied audience (e.g., an instructor versus someone in the general academic community)?
* Has the author used precise wording that helps the reader understand exactly what the author meant e.g., no highly specialized vocabulary or jargon?
  + Is the author choosing words that are likely to be understood by the intended audience, versus attempting to demonstrate the breadth of the author’s vocabulary?
* Has the author presented the ideas concisely so only the necessary details are provided in the text?
* Does each sentence have one primary idea? Are there long sentences that are difficult to follow that could be divided into more than one sentence to improve readability?
* Has the author provided sufficient explanations, connections, and definitions such that the reader can easily follow the discussion and the author’s thinking?

**Grammar**

* Is the work free of grammatical errors?
* Does the text suggest that the author read the essay out loud before submitting the final draft to catch awkward phrasing, typing errors, and overly long sentences?

**Punctuation**

* Does the punctuation in the work consistently follow punctuation rules?

**Spelling**

* Did the author complete a grammar and spell check?
* Did the author edit the work?

Do you have questions about this resource? Please contact [Theresa Bell](mailto:theresa.bell@royalroads.ca) in the RRU Writing Centre.