

Writing an Evaluation

You've probably evaluated things informally plenty of times. You tell a friend that you like a certain television show. Or you explain why you hated a recent movie you saw. This assignment takes those informal evaluations a step further.

The key to writing an evaluation is that you don't just say whether something is good or bad. You also explain the criteria you used to evaluate the thing. For example, one factor in evaluating a motion picture comedy might be the amount of hilarious quotable dialogue. For example, you might remember Rob Burgundy's exclamation: "Baxter, you know I don't speak Spanish!" That would be one criterion for evaluation.

In this assignment your objectives are to:

- **Introduce your topic and state your purpose.** Your evaluation's introduction should grab your audience's attention and make your purpose clear.
- **Develop and Describe Your Criteria.** Put some thought into this. For example, you might need to think about what makes a research source in general as well as what makes a credible source about the topic you're investigating. There's no exact minimum or maximum for criteria; however, you will probably want to have several in order to demonstrate a complex evaluation.
- **Evaluate the thing.** Use your criteria to evaluate the thing you are looking at. Also, think in terms of *ethos*. Will you seem credible if your evaluation does not include any weaknesses? What if your evaluation finds absolutely nothing of value?
- **Conduct Some Research.** This assignment doesn't require extensive research, but you can do some investigating to develop and support your criteria or support your evaluation. For example, how might a small survey provide evidence for your evaluation?

At this point in the semester, this is a credit/no credit assignment. To receive credit you must address all of the items described above in roughly 900-1200 words, MLA format.

This assignment is due Saturday, September 8th, at 11:59 p.m.

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Criteria for the Evaluation project

Here's what I'm looking for in your evaluations:

1. **Title**—*The title is engaging, appropriate and forecasts the content of the essay.*
2. **The Introduction**—*The introduction grabs the reader's interest, provides enough context to tell the reader what he or she will be reading about, and frames a clear thesis that answers the primary question.*
3. **The Research**—*Any research is integrated appropriately as evidence for your claims. All references are credible and adhere to MLA standards for in-text citation.*
4. **Arrangement**—*The essay is organized coherently with a natural progression that helps to reinforce the thesis. Sub-headings are acceptable.*
5. **The Criteria**—*The essay describes criteria for assessing the communication.*
6. **The Conclusion**—*The conclusion employs one of the strategies from page 34 of Easy Writer: summarizes the argument briefly, elaborates on the implications of your thesis, makes clear what you want readers to think and do, or makes a strong ethical or emotional appeal in a memorable way.*
7. **Voice**—*The tone of the essay strikes a balance between demonstrating your personality, avoiding stuffy language, and conveying professionalism.*
8. **Form, Surface Features, and Proofreading**—*The essay does not include errors in grammar or punctuation. The essay is also formatted according to MLA standards including font, font size, and page numbers.*
9. **Works Cited**—*The essay includes a works cited page that is properly formatted using MLA guidelines.*
10. **Length**—*The essay is three or four pages long, not including the works cited (i.e. 900-1,200 words).*