

## Guidelines for Assessment of Reading Outcome

### Outcome

Demonstrate college level communication skills (writing, **reading**, speaking, as appropriate). (Communication skills are those learned behaviors which enable individuals to effectively gather, **assimilate**, **process**, and disseminate information. Demonstration of the skills indicates that students can **read**, write, and speak **at the college level**.)

### Time Allowed for the Assessment

No specific time limit is required, the article and the analysis should, however, take the average student no more than 60 to 90 minutes.

### Assessment Methodology

Select a reading of from two to three pages appropriate for the class content. Require students to complete the “Template for Analyzing the Logic of an Article” from *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking*.

Prior to the analysis, you will have reviewed the elements of thought as discussed in the above, looking closely at the questions. You will have reframed the questions in terms of the writer instead of the reader. For example, instead of asking, “What am I trying to accomplish?” you would ask, “What is the writer trying to accomplish?”

Assess the students’ responses to the eight items by using the questions yourself and determining to what degree the student is able to identify each of the elements.

Keep in mind the following:

- When analyzing purpose, the piece may have one than one, but one is primary. For example, the article may be trying to persuade the reader that Model A is superior to Model B, but at the same time, the writer will be informing the reader about the two models. To persuade, in this case, is primary, but to inform is also a part of the logic. Remember there are basically three larger purposes for any communication: to persuade, to inform, and to entertain about something. But these purposes can be mixed with one predominating. In assessing, reserve the higher number for the student who recognizes all parts of the purpose and explains it thoroughly.
- When analyzing key question, students should zero in on one central question the writer is trying to answer. There may be supporting questions which help answer the larger question, but there will usually be one. In simple terms, the thesis or point of the article can be turned into the key question. Reserve the higher assessment values for the student who recognizes the key question and the subordinate questions.
- When analyzing information in the article, students should recognize different types (e.g. fact, statistics, quotes from experts, logical arguments) and indicate each’s role in supporting the article. The better students’ identification of types of information, the

better the assessment. For an outstanding assessment, students should identify where needed information may be lacking or where additional information would strengthen the article. Depending on the article you select, this may or may not be an issue.

- When analyzing inferences and conclusion, students should identify the key conclusions that the writer draws either overtly or by inference. To do this exceptionally well, students should also consider and discuss how the writer reached the conclusion and what other ways, if any, that the information presented could be interpreted.
- When analyzing concepts, make sure students at least identify one key concept that the reader must understand to understand the article. There are usually several. The more the students explain, the higher the assessment.
- When analyzing assumptions, students should state what the author is taking for granted about readers' understanding. There are always basic assumptions. For example, the writer assumes that the reader has the basic expertise or knowledge to understand the article. This, of course, may or may not be true. The writer may assume that the reader has a strong interest in the subject. The writer may assume that the reader understand a key concept that is not explained in the article. Reserve the highest assessment for the students who can explain in detail the assumptions.
- When analyzing implications, students should be able to detail the outcome if the writer's ideas are accepted or are not accepted. Are there consequences that follow?
- When analyzing point of view, the students should consider from what perspective and what background is the author looking at the subject from. Is the author an expert in the field? Is the author an educated explainer of the subject for lay audiences? Does the writer seem experienced? Is the writer biased in any way on the topic?