



Questions to Help Strengthen Your Writing

Some good first questions for most academic/essay writing

1. *What* is your main idea? Thesis? Central point? Tell me in your own words.
2. *Where* is your main idea in the paper?
3. What is the match between what was *intended* and what was *written*?
4. What is the *purpose* of the piece?
5. Who is the intended *audience*?
6. Can you name (and label in the margin) *each paragraph topic*?
7. What's working? What's not working?
8. What do you intend to do from here?
9. What do you want to work on?
10. Why did you make this choice, or that choice...?

Questions to ask about the writing process

1. How do you usually approach a writing project?
2. How did you go about writing this paper?
3. How much time have you spent?
4. What did you spend the most time on?
5. What did you find the most difficult?
6. How did you generate ideas?
7. How did you organize the paper?
8. How/Did you use an outline or plan?
9. How did you decide on the introduction strategy?
10. The conclusion strategy?
11. When do you revise?
12. How do you revise?
13. What kinds of revisions have you already made?

Questions to ask about content or development

1. Why did you decided to write on this topic?
2. What is your experience in this area? Tell me more
3. What process did you go through in generating your ideas?
4. What process did you go through in reading source materials?
5. How did you select what is in the text and why?
6. What has been left out?
7. Are there enough sub-topics to support the central idea?
8. Is each point adequately developed? Equally developed?
9. What content is strongest? What content needs strengthening?
10. Is the support varied? Logical? Interesting? Creative?



Questions to ask about organization

1. How did you organize your paper?
2. What made you decide to organize it in this way?
3. How well do you think the organization works?
4. In what other ways can the paper be effectively organized?
5. How well does the piece “hang together” as a whole?
6. Are there places where the reader loses the point or train of thought?
7. How does one paragraph connect to the next?
8. How does each paragraph connect to the central idea?
9. Is each paragraph logically organized?
10. How does one sentence connect to the next?
11. What kinds of sentence structure strategies can help make better connections?
12. How and where might you combine sentences?
13. What kinds of words can you use to make better connections?

Questions to ask about focus or unity

1. Does the writing address and sustain one overall central idea?
2. How did you achieve this focus?
3. Where does the paper veer from its intended focus?
4. Does each subtopic address the central idea?
5. What strategies can you use to achieve greater focus?

Questions to ask about grammar, language use, and style

1. How does writing *sound* to you?
2. Where does the writing sound its best? How so?
3. When you read it aloud, do you notice any difficulties with particular sentences, words?
4. Where can you use more concrete language? Fresher language?
5. How/Where might you make use of figurative or other creative language?
6. What are some *patterns* of language or punctuation use we can address?
7. How smoothly and accurately are you integrating source material?



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