



Faculty Review of Open eTextbooks

The [California Open Educational Resources Council](http://www.cool4ed.org) has designed and implemented a faculty review process of the free and open etextbooks showcased within the California Open Online Library for Education (www.cool4ed.org). Faculty from the California Community Colleges, the California State University, and the University of California were invited to review the selected free and open etextbooks using a rubric. Faculty received a stipend for their efforts and funding was provided by the State of California, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Textbook Name:

English Composition



License:



English Composition by Lumen Learning is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Find it: [eTextbook Website](#)

Textbook Author:

Lumen Learning

Reviewed by:

Sabrina Nelson

Institution:

Berkeley City College

Title/Position:

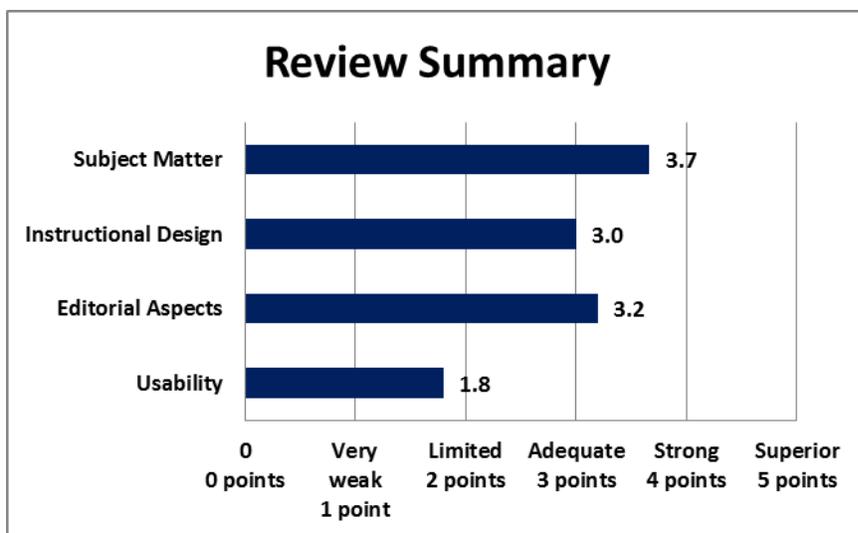
Professor

Format

Reviewed:

[Online](#)

A small fee may be associated with various formats.



Date Reviewed:

March 2015

California OER Council eTextbook Evaluation Rubric

CA Course ID: [ENGL 105](#)

Subject Matter (30 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the content accurate, error-free, and unbiased?					X	
Does the text adequately cover the designated course with a sufficient degree of depth and scope?					X	
Does the textbook use sufficient and relevant examples to present its subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook use a clear, consistent terminology to present its subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook reflect current knowledge of the subject matter?					X	
Does the textbook present its subject matter in a culturally sensitive manner? (e.g. Is the textbook free of offensive and insensitive examples? Does it include			X			

examples that are inclusive of a variety of races, ethnicities, and backgrounds?)						
---	--	--	--	--	--	--

Total Points: 22 out of 30

Please provide comments on any aspect of the subject matter of this textbook:

- The textbook is actually a website which is part of a larger learning management system. Common lessons on various writing genre are broken out into modules. There are quite a few external sources, many of which are videos. There isn't a lot of text to read. As such, the material is basic and gives students an adequate overview of the subject matter. Some of the videos feel a little dated and could use some polish. Some of the video links were broken, and some of the videos needed better (more accurate) closed captioning. There was a transcript for most of the videos, but having taught deaf students, they prefer to have both accurate closed captioning and the transcript. Finally, this may be too simplistic for an advanced course such as Critical Thinking, English 105.

Instructional Design (35 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Does the textbook present its subject materials at appropriate reading levels for undergrad use?					X	
Does the textbook reflect a consideration of different learning styles? (e.g. visual, textual?)				X		
Does the textbook present explicit learning outcomes aligned with the course and curriculum?				X		
Is a coherent organization of the textbook evident to the reader/student?					X	
Does the textbook reflect best practices in the instruction of the designated course?				X		
Does the textbook contain sufficient effective ancillary materials? (e.g. test banks, individual and/or group activities or exercises, pedagogical apparatus, etc.)				X		
Is the textbook searchable?		X				

Total Points: 21 out of 35

Please provide comments on any aspect of the instructional design of this textbook:

- The reading level is appropriate for most users, and the videos provide varying degrees of interest, to keep a learner engaged. It feels as though the site relies a little too heavily on videos, and it might be a challenge for non-visual learners. I wouldn't recommend it for blind or sight-impaired individuals. The learning outcomes do not seem to be explicit, although there are self-tests and reflections at the end of many of the modules, and it is easy for a student to see their grades as they navigate through the course. Search is limited to returning to the home page or doing a word search within a page.

Editorial Aspects (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the language of the textbook free of grammatical, spelling, usage, and typographical errors?					X	
Is the textbook written in a clear, engaging style?					X	
Does the textbook adhere to effective principles of design? (e.g. are pages laid out and organized to be clear and visually engaging and effective? Are colors, font, and typography consistent and unified?)				X		
Does the textbook include conventional editorial features? (e.g. a table of contents, glossary, citations and further references)			X			
How effective are multimedia elements of the textbook? (e.g. graphics, animations, audio)				X		

Total Points: 16 out of 25

Please provide comments on any editorial aspect of this textbook.

- The overall style feels a bit too basic, and the text spreads across wide pages. It is often easier to read a page online when the text is in narrower columns that mimic the size of a book. There are not too many visual elements within the main text, except for the external links to videos or off-site essays. The home page acts as the table of contents and there is no glossary. There do not seem to be external references and occasionally, a link is blocked because the site keeps asking for a login. The multimedia elements of the book are the external videos. They seem to be adequate but because they are produced by a variety of people, and because they seem to be relatively old (2008 and before), the quality varies. Some just need a bit of updating.

Usability (25 possible points)	N/A (0 pts)	Very Weak (1pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
Is the textbook compatible with standard and commonly available hardware/software in college/university campus student computer labs?				X		
Is the textbook accessible in a variety of different electronic formats? (e.g. .txt, .pdf, .epub, etc.)		X				
Can the textbook be printed easily?		X				
Does the user interface implicitly inform the reader how to interact with and navigate the textbook?				X		
How easily can the textbook be annotated by students and instructors?		X				

Total Points: 9 out of 25

Please provide comments on any aspect of access concerning this textbook.

- The book works best on a computer, laptop or larger tablet like an iPad. There is too much on the screen for it to work well on a smaller tablet or smartphone. The only format available seems to be web page. A few pages could be printed but it would be cumbersome to try and print the entire site. There are transcripts for the videos, but overall, the site isn't really designed for printing. The user interface has a navigational bar on the left that is very sparse. The nav bar could benefit from having individual links to each chapter and function more like a table of contents. For annotation, a user could print a page and handwrite annotations, or save the text from a page into a word processor and add their own notes that way. I'd recommend students use Evernote, a free web-app, to create their own clippings for annotation, provided the site allows them to external link. The security on the site made some things difficult to test.

Overall Ratings	Not at all (0 pts)	Very Weak (1 pt)	Limited (2 pts)	Adequate (3 pts)	Strong (4 pts)	Superior (5 pts)
What is your overall impression of the textbook?			X			
How willing would you be to adopt this book?	Not at all (0 pts)	Strong reservations (1 pt)	Limited willingness (2 pts)	Willing (3 pts)	Strongly willing (4 pts)	Enthusiastically willing (5 pts)
		X				

Total Points: 3 out of 10

Overall Comments

If you were to recommend this textbook to colleagues, what merits of the textbook would you highlight?

- I would have a hard time recommending the text due to the broken links, dated videos and lack of a table of contents or other more effective navigation.

What areas of this textbook require improvement in order for it to be used in your courses?

- More up to date videos, better navigation, clearer definition of SLOs for each assignment, more imagery and cultural diversity.

We invite you to add your feedback on the textbook or the review to [the textbook site in MERLOT](#) (Please [register](#) in MERLOT to post your feedback.)



For questions or more information, contact the [CA Open Educational Resources Council](#).



This [review](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License](#).