In the **Language and Style** category, you have achieved a rating of **Emerging**.

You can improve your writing score in this category by revising your essay based on specific criteria.

In order to move up to the **Developing** rating, your writing must

* incorporate language that attempts to maintain a formal style; and
* attempt to include strong word choices and varied sentence structure.

You should remember a few things when revising for language and style.

**Consider Your Audience**

In academic writing, you should maintain a formal style throughout the essay so your audience feels that you are presenting a serious point of view worth considering. Ask yourself the following questions:

* **Are there contractions I should break apart?** For example, consider *does not, will not*, or *had not* instead of *doesn’t*, *won’t*, or *hadn’t*.
* **Are there abbreviations I should spell out?**
* **Is there slang I can replace with more standard words and phrases?**

**Evaluate Word Choice**

Review the choices you made when selecting words. Ask yourself the following questions:

* **Will the technical language I use be understood by my readers, or should I provide more explanation?** Explaining technical terms can show your audience that you understand the subject matter.
* **Can I make the subject and meaning of my sentences clearer?** Consider replacing vague pronouns like *it* with the noun it represents, if the meaning of the pronoun might be unclear to the reader.

**Sentence Structure**

By varying your sentence structure, you can make your essay easier and more interesting to read. Ask yourself the following questions:

* **Do I use the same sentence beginning in multiple sentences in a row?** Try to vary the way you begin sentences to avoid repetition.   
    
  For example, “Students want freedom. Students need to have opportunities to fail.” Revising the subject of the second sentence can improve the flow: “Students want freedom. They need to have opportunities to fail.”
* **Do I use the same type of sentence repeatedly?** Try combining simple sentences that can slow your writing down. For example, if you have multiple simple sentences in a row, could you combine predicates?   
    
  For example, “Students want freedom. They need to have opportunities to fail. Students should be able to try new things.” Revise to streamline the thoughts in a single sentence: “Students want freedom and need to have opportunities to fail or to try new things.”

**Proofreading Checklist for Conventions, Usage, and Punctuation**

Use the following checklist to review and finalize the draft.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ▢ | Avoid using “I think,” “I believe,” or “I feel” in the claim statement. |
| ▢ | Ensure sentences are complete and are capitalized appropriately. |
| ▢ | Check for run-ons, fragments, and comma splices. |
| ▢ | Check subject and verb agreement. |
| ▢ | Check for correct verb tense. |
| ▢ | Check spelling and punctuation. |
| ▢ | Remove slang words and phrases, except when using it deliberately for emphasis or effect. |
| ▢ | Ensure that formal, objective, and appealing style is maintained throughout the essay. |

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