

## Instrument Critique

The goal of this assignment is to give you experience reviewing a gerontology assessment instrument. You can choose any assessment instrument you like as long as it fulfills two criteria. First, there should be a theoretical/empirical literature available about the instrument's use with older adults. Second, there should be adequate documentation available that allows you to write a comprehensive review of the instrument.

What constitutes a comprehensive review? That's part of what you'll need to decide, but here are some thoughts. Imagine that your audience for this paper is an advanced graduate student, independent researcher, scholar, or clinician in gerontology who is looking for an assessment instrument. This person is a genuine scientist-practitioner, so she is interested in knowing about empirical and psychometric aspects of the instrument as well as the scale's application. What would she want to know about the instrument you've reviewed? What would help her make a decision about whether she should use this instrument? I want you to think about what information is most relevant to a comprehensive review. Then, of course, I want you to write the review.

Part of your grading for this assignment will be based on the comprehensiveness of the information you provide, the actual content. Remember that our class focuses on aging, so while you may provide information related to other age groups (e.g., an instrument used with older people may have originated with a version used with younger people; or, the theoretical underpinnings of the instrument may cross age boundaries), the bulk of your critique should focus on details related to older adults. In class I'll distribute a sample test critique from a popular reference series called *Test Critiques*. The sample is one model for how you might approach this assignment, but it is only a model. I can imagine other ways you might organize your writing and other content you might choose to include.

Another part of the grading will focus on how you organize the paper, proper grammar, and writing style. Writing is serious (and challenging business). Please proofread your paper carefully and follow these formatting guidelines: one-inch margins on all sides, 12-point font, number each page, use APA style for citations and references. As a warning, here are some of my writing pet peeves: there should be no spelling errors in your paper, avoid unnecessary adverbs, do not split your infinitives, use gender-neutral language, make sure your subject and verb agree with one another. When in doubt, consult the *APA Publication Manual* or any good style book. Finally, remember that this assignment calls for a critique ("a critical analysis or evaluation," per Webster's), which implies that you will be making judgments, offering an opinion. So, your paper will need a thesis and a structure that enables you to build a case.

I anticipate that the paper will be 7-10 pages, but as always, you can judge how much space you need to say what you want to say.

### *Grading*

Organization:	15 points
Grammar and style:	15 points
Content:	70 points
TOTAL:	100 points

## **Grading checklist**

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### Organization (15 points)

- \_\_\_\_\_ intro paragraph that sets up structure of the paper
- \_\_\_\_\_ thesis statement
- \_\_\_\_\_ transition sentences
- \_\_\_\_\_ cohesive presentation of information
- \_\_\_\_\_ summary at conclusion

### Grammar and style (15 points)

- \_\_\_\_\_ no spelling errors
- \_\_\_\_\_ no grammatical errors
- \_\_\_\_\_ clear writing style

### Content (70 points)

- \_\_\_\_\_ theoretical underpinnings of the scale are discussed
- \_\_\_\_\_ in what circumstances is the scale used
- \_\_\_\_\_ with what populations is the scale used
- \_\_\_\_\_ are older adult norms available
- \_\_\_\_\_ reliability
- \_\_\_\_\_ validity
- \_\_\_\_\_ scale's strengths
- \_\_\_\_\_ scale's weaknesses
- \_\_\_\_\_ provide a logical, well-reasoned evaluation of the scale