# User Document Rubric

Traci Gardner / September 16, 2025

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| Criteria | Description | Exceeds Expectations | Meets Expectations | Almost There | Needs Work | Missing |
| Project Focus | Directly ties to the report subject and a real user need. |  | Focuses on a user-facing document related to the subject of your informational report. | Focuses on a user-facing document but does not fully relate to the subject of your informational report. |  | Focuses on another topic. |
| Audience & Accessibility | Tailors content for non-expert users; considers access needs. | Anticipates diverse users; choices consistently support access. | Is appropriate for non-experts; all information is clear and accessible. | Is generally accessible but uneven in places. | Tone/choices impede usability for target users. | Does not adequately address audience accessibility. |
| User Document Introductory Sections | Includes clear title, document date, introduction to the document and relevant, general notices. | Provides clear, accurate title; includes document date; introduces document professionally; and includes useful notices. | Includes all required elements; provides a detailed and complete beginning to the document. | Includes all elements, but one is weak, incomplete, or unclear. | Missing one or two required elements and/or several elements are incomplete or confusing. | Missing more than two required elements. |
| Terminology & Background | Defines terms; adds brief background as needed. | Anticipates all knowledge gaps; provides just-enough theory. | Defines all unfamiliar terms and provides relevant background information. | Defines most unfamiliar terms and provides background, but misses some details. | Uses jargon and undefined terms and/or background is incompletely explained. | No explanation of terminology; necessary background information missing. |
| Equipment & Supplies | Provides complete, specific list of tools/materials. | Provides complete list of tools/materials with helpful specifications/alternatives and visuals as needed. | Provides complete list with necessary specifications. | Makes minor omissions and/or includes vague specifications. | Omits major items and/or specifications. | Equipment & supplies not included. |
| Directions & Step Quality | Uses active voice; one action per step; correct list types; nesting/alternatives as needed. | Uses well-organized steps with active verbs and properly formatted lists. | Uses clear, complete, and correctly formatted steps. Uses active verbs throughout. | Includes some multi-action or mis-formatted steps, and/or occasional active verb errors. | Includes many unclear/mis-ordered steps. | Steps missing or unclear. |
| Conclusion & Troubleshooting | Wraps up document, explains what to do if it goes wrong, and includes contact info. | Provides a clear wrap-up with actionable troubleshooting and contact info. | Includes wrap-up, basic troubleshooting, and contact info. | Omits or does not fully provide one element. | Omits more than one element (e.g., troubleshooting information missing). | Conclusion and troubleshooting information missing. |
| Visuals | Includes at least four relevant visuals, each with two-part captions. Refers directly to the visual in the text with clear explanation and context. Avoids clipart. | Includes 4 or more relevant, professional visuals; provides clear two-part captions; refers directly in the text with full explanation and context. | Includes 4 or more useful visuals with accurate two-part captions; refers directly in the text with clear explanation and context. | Includes 4 or more visuals but captions are incomplete, context is limited, or references are unclear. | Includes visuals that are weak, irrelevant, or unprofessional. Does not include captions or references in the text to explain them. | Uses clipart or irrelevant images OR includes fewer than 4 visuals. |
| Documentation (as needed) | Lists all sources in correct format. | Cites all sources accurately with correct formatting. | Includes all sources with consistent formatting. | Omits a source and/or makes minor formatting errors. | Omits two or more sources and/or makes frequent formatting errors. | Section missing. |
| Cover Memo | Uses neutral-news structure; Explains purpose of the memo, indicates the intended audience and purpose for the user document, clearly connects user document to report topic. Includes contact info. | Thoroughly explains audience, use, and connection to report topic. Uses memo format flawlessly. | Explains audience and purpose for the user document with clear connection to the report topic. Uses memo format accurately. | Provides some incomplete or unclear content and/or makes minor errors in memo format. | Is missing significant information and/or uses incorrect memo format. | Cover Memo is missing. |
| Document Design & Use of CRAP Design Principles | Uses headings, lists, spacing, and paragraphing. Uses CRAP design principles, fonts, chunking, and other formatting elements effectively to increase readability. | Uses flawless formatting. Shows strong contrast between headings and the document paragraphs. Uses spacing, fonts, and chunking and CRAP design principles to make the message highly readable and professional. | Uses accurate and appropriate formatting. Formats headings, spacing, and CRAP design principles consistently. Uses lists, horizontal rules, and boxes as effective visual elements. | May include minor formatting errors and/or includes minor errors in headings, paragraphing, spacing, or application of CRAP design principles. | Uses incorrect formatting, inadequate contrast between headings and text, large paragraphs, and/or inaccurate spacing. Inconsistently applies CRAP design principles. | Does not meet formatting or design requirements. |
| Tone & Plain Language | Uses clear, objective, professional tone. Uses short sentences and other plain language techniques. | Is consistently objective, professional, and reader-friendly. Phrases sentences concisely and smoothly. Perfectly written for the audience. | Is objective, professional, and clear throughout. Effectively uses plain language. | Is mostly objective and professional but occasionally uses complicated, overly technical, wordy, and/or repetitive phrasing. | Uses unprofessional tone and/or language that is too technical or confusing | No attempt to customize the tone and language to the audience. |