

# VAPOR Self-Assessment for AI-Assisted Writing

## Framework Overview

This framework supports critical composition pedagogy by helping learners develop rhetorical awareness of AI as a persuasive tool rather than neutral assistant. It emphasizes authorial agency, authentic voice, and responsible use of AI assistance in the writing process.

## Assessment Purpose

**Context:** Students are introduced to the VAPOR framework and its utility for AI-assisted writing; they encounter student-facing instructions, a description of the model and concepts, purpose of the assessment, and scoring outcomes. They use the VAPOR framework to make informed decisions about co-composing with AI-assisted writing technologies.

**Interactive File:** A sample model of the interactive assessment is below, with the goal being that learners interact with the tool when they are co-composing with AI. Click the icon below to access the interactive file You can also save, download, and open the file from the VAPOR Self-Assessment for AI-Assisted Writing [folder](#) directly.



VAPOR Self-Assessment\_2026.html

**Adaptable Full Text Version:** A full text sample of the VAPOR Self-Assessment content and sequence is included in this document. This full text version can be adapted depending on the integration context (e.g., classroom lecture, training worksheet, or online assessment) and the discipline or field.

It includes the following sections:

- Student-Facing Background Information
- Student-Facing Assessment Sample
- Adaptation Guide for Educators
- Instructions for Citation, Use, and Attribution

*VAPOR Self-Assessment for AI-Assisted Writing. Companion document to Martin, S. (2026, May 27). The VAPOR Framework for Critical AI Literacy Across Disciplines. Online Learning Consortium.*  
<https://onlinelearningconsortium.org/olc-insights/2026/05/vapor-framework/>

# Student-Facing Background Information

*(Can be visible to student within the interaction or presented as pre-activity content)*

## Purpose of This Assessment

This assessment helps you evaluate your critical engagement with AI writing tools. A **high VAPOR score** suggests you may be using AI uncritically. A **low VAPOR score** indicates strong authorial agency and responsible co-composition.

**VAPOR Metaphor:** Just as vapor lacks substance, uncritical AI usage can leave your writing without authentic voice, agency, or ownership. This tool helps you identify and address these concerns.

## How to Use This Assessment

1. Answer each question honestly based on your current draft
2. Write brief reflections in response to the prompts
3. Calculate your VAPOR score using the scoring guide
4. Review recommended actions based on your score

## What Each Element Measures

- **VOICE** measures whether your authentic writing style is present or if the text sounds generic, overly formal, or unlike you.
- **AGENCY** measures whether you actively controlled the writing process or passively accepted AI suggestions without rhetorical reasoning.
- **POSTURE** measures whether you're strategically positioning yourself for your audience or simply performing what you think is "expected."
- **ORIGIN** measures whether you can trace and explain the sources of your ideas and language choices.
- **RESPONSIBILITY** measures whether you understand and can defend the content you're submitting as your own work.

## Why "VAPOR"?

The metaphor suggests that uncritical AI usage can leave writing insubstantial; lacking the weight, presence, and authenticity of work where the author has maintained critical control. Just as vapor dissipates, writing without strong authorial voice and agency may fail to make a lasting impact or fulfill rhetorical goals.

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## What This Assessment Helps You Learn

This assessment supports critical composition, writing, and communication outcomes:

- **Develop AI literacy through rhetorical analysis:** You identify how AI makes rhetorical moves when transforming writing, analyzing its persuasive patterns, word choices, tone shifts, and structural recommendations.
- **Strengthen authorial voice and agency:** You maintain ownership of your narratives by critically evaluating AI suggestions using rhetorical context (audience, purpose, genre) as a decision-making framework.
- **Understand AI affordances and limitations:** You experience when AI enhances your work versus when it conflicts with your intended meaning or authentic self-presentation.
- **Demonstrate critical awareness:** You recognize AI as a persuasive tool rather than a neutral assistant, making deliberate choices about when and how to integrate its suggestions.

# Student-Facing Assessment Sample

**Instructions for Students:** Answer each question honestly based on your current draft. Circle your response, then use the scoring guide to calculate your VAPOR score and identify areas for revision.

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## SECTION 1: VOICE

*Does this writing sound like you?*

**1.1** When you read your draft aloud, does it sound like something you would actually say or write?

- Yes (0 points)
- Somewhat (1 point)
- No (2 points)

**Reflection:** Identify one sentence that feels authentically "you" and one that feels borrowed or generic.

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**1.2** Can you identify specific sentences or phrases that feel "off" or unlike your typical writing style?

- No, everything sounds like me (0 points)
- A few sentences feel different (1 point)
- Yes, many parts don't sound like me (2 points)

**Reflection:** Why do these sentences feel different? Did AI suggest them, or did you write them trying to sound more "academic"?

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**1.3** If someone who knows your writing well (instructor, peer, colleague) read this draft without your name on it, would they recognize it as yours?

- Definitely yes (0 points)
- Maybe (1 point)
- Probably not (2 points)

**Reflection:** What specific markers of your voice are present (or missing)? Consider word choice, sentence structure, examples you use.

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**VOICE SUBSCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_ / 6

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## **SECTION 2: AGENCY**

*Did you drive the AI interaction, or did AI drive you?*

**2.1** Did you make deliberate choices about which AI suggestions to accept or reject based on your rhetorical goals?

- Yes, I made conscious decisions (0 points)
- Sometimes, but not consistently (1 point)
- No, I accepted most suggestions without much thought (2 points)

**Reflection:** List 2-3 AI suggestions you rejected and explain your reasoning.

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**2.2** Can you explain WHY you accepted specific AI recommendations in terms of your audience, purpose, and genre?

- Yes, I can explain my choices (0 points)
- For some, but not all (1 point)
- No, I'm not sure why I accepted them (2 points)

**Reflection:** Choose one AI suggestion you accepted. Explain how it serves your specific rhetorical goals.

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**2.3** Did you use "accept all," "regenerate until satisfied," or adopt large sections of AI output without significant revision?

- No, I revised substantially (0 points)
- For some sections (1 point)
- Yes, for most of the draft (2 points)

**Reflection:** If you answered yes, what would happen if you revisited those sections more critically now?

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**AGENCY SUBSCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_ / 6

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## **SECTION 3: POSTURE**

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*Does this reflect how you want to position yourself, or what you think is expected?*

**3.1** Does this draft position you the way you want to be perceived by your specific audience?

- Yes, this reflects my strategic positioning (0 points)
- Partially (1 point)
- No, this feels generic or off-target (2 points)

**Reflection:** What persona does this writing project? Is that strategic for your purpose, or just "safe"?

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**3.2** Are you writing what you think the audience expects rather than what you actually want to communicate?

- No, this is authentic communication (0 points)
- In some places (1 point)
- Yes, I'm mostly performing "good writing" (2 points)

**Reflection:** Where might you be performing "expected" writing instead of meaningful communication? Be specific.

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**3.3** Does the tone match your genuine relationship to this topic and audience?

- Yes, it feels appropriate and authentic (0 points)
- Somewhat (1 point)
- No, it feels forced or mismatched (2 points)

**Reflection:** If you were speaking to this audience face-to-face about this topic, would you say it this way? What would change?

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**POSTURE SUBSCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_ / 6

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#### **SECTION 4: ORIGIN**

*Can you trace where your writing came from?*

**4.1** Could you highlight which parts came from AI versus your original writing if someone asked you to identify them?

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- Yes, I can clearly distinguish (0 points)
- Mostly, but some sections blur together (1 point)
- No, I can't really tell anymore (2 points)

**Reflection:** Try this now. Use two colors to mark AI-originated content versus your original writing. What do you notice about the balance?

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**4.2** Do you remember your original ideas and argument before AI interaction?

- Yes, clearly (0 points)
- Somewhat, but they've shifted (1 point)
- No, I'm not sure what I started with (2 points)

**Reflection:** Write 1-2 sentences describing your core argument before you used AI. How has it changed? Were those changes intentional?

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**4.3** Can you trace the evolution of your draft from initial ideas through AI assistance to final version?

- Yes, I tracked changes deliberately (0 points)
- Partially (1 point)
- No, the process is unclear (2 points)

**Reflection:** What got lost in the process? What got gained? Which changes were intentional versus accidental?

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**ORIGIN SUBSCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_ / 6

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## **SECTION 5: RESPONSIBILITY**

*Do you own this work and its claims?*

**5.1** Would you feel confident defending every claim in this draft if challenged by your instructor, peers, or professional colleagues?

- Yes, I can defend everything (0 points)
- Most claims, but not all (1 point)
- No, some claims I can't fully support (2 points)

**Reflection:** Are there statements you included because they sounded authoritative but you're not sure you fully understand or believe them?

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**5.2** Do you understand all the vocabulary, concepts, and technical content well enough to explain them in your own words without AI assistance?

- Yes, I understand everything (0 points)
- Most, but some terms are unclear (1 point)
- No, I used terms I don't fully grasp (2 points)

**Reflection:** Pick the most complex sentence in your draft. Can you rewrite it three completely different ways while preserving the meaning?

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**5.3** If this writing failed to achieve its purpose, caused harm, or was publicly criticized, could you explain and defend your process and decisions?

- Yes, I made deliberate choices I can explain (0 points)
- Partially (1 point)
- No, I would struggle to justify my choices (2 points)

**Reflection:** What consequences matter for this writing (grade, professional reputation, real-world impact)? Are you prepared to own them?

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**RESPONSIBILITY SUBSCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_ / 6

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### SCORING CALCULATION

**Step 1:** Add your subscores

- Voice: \_\_\_\_\_ / 6
- Agency: \_\_\_\_\_ / 6
- Posture: \_\_\_\_\_ / 6
- Origin: \_\_\_\_\_ / 6
- Responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_ / 6

**TOTAL SCORE:** \_\_\_\_\_ / 30

**Step 2:** Convert to percentage

**VAPOR SCORE = (Total Score ÷ 30) × 100 = \_\_\_\_\_%**

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## INTERPRETING YOUR VAPOR SCORE

### HIGH RISK: 60-100%

**Description:** Significant concerns about authorial control and critical engagement with AI.

**What this means:** Your responses indicate low confidence in voice, agency, or responsibility. You may be using AI uncritically or have lost track of your original thinking.

#### Diagnostic Criteria (3 or more indicate high risk):

- Cannot distinguish AI content from your own writing
- Accepted AI suggestions without rhetorical reasoning
- Writing doesn't sound like you
- Cannot defend major claims or explain concepts
- Lost track of original ideas during AI interaction
- Performing "expected" writing rather than authentic communication

#### Required Actions Before Submission:

1. **Voice Recovery:** Identify sections that don't sound like you. Rewrite them completely in your own words without AI assistance.
2. **Agency Audit:** Review every AI suggestion you accepted. Document WHY each serves your rhetorical goals or remove it.
3. **Comprehension Check:** For each major claim or complex concept, write a 2-3 sentence explanation in your own words without looking at the draft.
4. **Origin Mapping:** Use highlighting to distinguish AI content from your original writing. If AI content exceeds 40%, start over with clearer rhetorical intentions.
5. **Responsibility Test:** Imagine explaining this work to someone who challenges every claim. Where would you struggle? Those sections need revision.

**Consider:** You may need to restart this assignment with a clearer plan for how AI will support (not replace) your thinking.

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### MODERATE RISK: 30-59%

**Description:** Developing critical awareness with identifiable areas for improvement.

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**What this means:** You're showing some critical engagement but have blind spots. You're on the right track but need to strengthen specific areas flagged in your responses.

**Diagnostic Criteria (2-3 indicate moderate risk):**

- Some sections lack your authentic voice
- Inconsistent rhetorical reasoning for AI choices
- Partial uncertainty about content origins
- Some claims you couldn't fully defend
- Unclear about why you accepted some AI suggestions

**Recommended Actions:**

1. **Targeted Revision:** Focus on questions where you scored 2 points. These are your highest-risk areas.
2. **Decision Documentation:** Create a log tracking what you accept/reject from AI and why. Use this for future assignments.
3. **Peer Consultation:** Explain your rhetorical choices to someone else. Can you articulate why each AI suggestion serves your goals?
4. **Comprehension Verification:** For any vocabulary or concepts you're uncertain about, write definitions in your own words and verify accuracy.
5. **Voice Strengthening:** Read your draft aloud. Mark sentences that sound unlike you and revise them to match your natural expression.

**Goal:** Move toward low-risk category by developing more consistent critical AI practices.

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**LOW RISK: 0-29%**

**Definition:** Strong authorial control and critical engagement with AI assistance.

**What this means:** You demonstrate thoughtful, strategic use of AI while maintaining ownership of your work. You're using AI as a tool while preserving your voice and agency.

**Diagnostic Criteria (4 or more indicate low risk):**

- Can clearly distinguish your writing from AI contributions
- Made deliberate, defensible choices about AI suggestions

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- Writing authentically reflects your voice
- Can fully explain and defend all claims
- Maintained clear sense of original ideas throughout process
- Strategic positioning matches your rhetorical goals

**Maintenance Actions:**

1. **Document Success:** Write 2-3 sentences about what made this process work. What will you replicate in future assignments?
2. **Share Strategies:** Consider helping peers develop similar critical AI practices. What advice would you give?
3. **Reflect on Transfer:** How might your approach need to adjust for different genres, audiences, or disciplines?
4. **Continuous Improvement:** Even strong scores benefit from reflection. Review your responses. Where could you strengthen further?
5. **Metacognitive Development:** Track how your VAPOR scores change across assignments. What patterns emerge?

**Recognition:** You're modeling responsible AI co-composition. Continue refining your critical AI literacy.

**POST-ASSESSMENT ACTION PLAN**

Based on my VAPOR score of \_\_\_\_%, I commit to the following actions before submission:

**Immediate Revisions (complete before next draft):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Process Improvements (for future assignments):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

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**Support Needed (questions for instructor/writing center/peers):**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

**Timeline:** I will complete these revisions by: \_\_\_\_\_

**Instructor Use:** This completed assessment demonstrates the student's metacognitive engagement with AI-assisted writing and can be evaluated as part of the assignment submission.

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# Adaptation Guide for Educators

Below are sample ways for educators to consider applying the VAPOR framework into different course or training touchpoints.

## Discipline-Specific Modifications:

*For STEM fields:* Adjust reflection prompts to focus on technical accuracy, methodology explanation, and data interpretation rather than narrative voice.

*For professional programs:* Emphasize industry standards, ethical implications, and real-world consequences of claims.

*For creative writing:* Focus on artistic vision, stylistic choices, and maintaining distinctive creative voice.

## Evaluation Options:

- **Formative only:** Use for self-awareness without grade impact
- **Completion credit:** Award points for thoughtful completion and reflection
- **Required revision trigger:** Scores above 60% require documented revision before submission
- **Portfolio assessment:** Track score changes across semester to evaluate AI literacy development

## Integration Points:

- Pre-draft (establish intentions)
- Mid-process (check alignment)
- Pre-submission (final verification)
- Portfolio reflection (demonstrate growth)

## Learning Activities:

- **VAPOR Peer Review:** Students exchange drafts and predict each other's VAPOR scores, then discuss discrepancies and rhetorical choices.
- **VAPOR Journaling:** Students maintain a semester-long log tracking VAPOR scores, noting patterns and growth in their critical engagement with AI tools.
- **Case Study Analysis:** Class examines sample texts with different VAPOR profiles (high, moderate, low) and discusses rhetorical effectiveness and authorial presence.
- **Before/After Comparison:** Students save "before AI" and "after AI" versions of drafts, then use the VAPOR framework to analyze what changed and why.

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- **Genre-Specific VAPOR Comparison:** Students adapt VAPOR questions for different writing situations (cover letters vs. personal narratives vs. research arguments) and discuss how appropriate AI usage varies by context.
- **Post-VAPOR Score Student Action Plan:** Students complete a structured reflection based on their VAPOR score, identifying immediate revision actions, ongoing development goals, and questions for their instructor or writing center.
  - Based on my VAPOR score of \_\_\_\_%, I will take the following actions before submitting my draft:

**Immediate Actions (before next draft):** (Students list 3 examples)

**Ongoing Development (for future assignments):** (Students list 3 examples)

**Questions for Instructor/Writing Center/Tutor:** (Students list 3 examples)

### Discussion Prompts

- When might a higher VAPOR score be acceptable or even desirable?
- How does the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, genre) affect appropriate AI usage?
- What patterns do you notice in which VAPOR elements you struggle with most?
- How has your VAPOR score changed across assignments? What does this reveal about your development as a writer?

# Citation, Use, and Attribution

## Citation

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