



Mal Warwick Associates

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Rating the writing: how to assess an email fundraising appeal

Rate email on each criterion, circling the rating, with 5 = best, 0 = worst.

#	Criterion	Rating	Weight	Total
1	Speaks <i>to</i> the reader, <i>from</i> the signer. Uses the singular personal pronouns, "you" and "I."	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 2 =	
2	Talks about benefits, not needs.	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 3 =	
3	The "offer" is unmistakably clear. Benefits to donor are compelling. Asks for a specific amount of money or other explicit act.	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 3 =	
4	Subject line is compelling, relevant, or personal without seeming cheesy.	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 2 =	
5	Establishes urgency—i.e., makes the case to take action <i>now</i> .	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 2 =	
6	Sender is recognizable.	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 2 =	
7	Powerful writing style: short words, emotion, short sentences, short paragraphs, no ten-dollar words, foreign expressions, abbreviations, acronyms. Uses Anglo-Saxon, not Latin.	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 2 =	
8	Formatted and designed for easy reading. Uses white space, bullets, underlining, a P.S. Looks like a typewritten letter.	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 1 =	
9	Appeal is as long (or as short) as necessary to make the case. Must address all the unspoken questions a reader's likely to have.	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 1 =	
10	Graphics used are eye-catching, compelling.	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 3 =	
11	Landing page follows naturally from the message and makes it easy to take action.	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 2 =	
12	Effectively uses color, graphics, white space to emphasize essentials: benefits, deadline, call to action.	0 1 2 3 4 5	x 1 =	
TOTAL				

***Total the 11 ratings. (Remember: 0 x 5 = 0!)
Then, to evaluate your score, turn to the next page.***

How to evaluate your score

With as many as five points available for each of the eleven criteria, and weighting factors that total 24, a perfect score is 120 points. You may translate a numerical score into a letter grade as follows:

<i>Rating</i>	<i>Letter Grade</i>	<i>Meaning</i>
110 - 120	A+	No more need be said.
100 - 109	A	Give that writer a pat on the back!
80 - 99	B	Shows lots of promise.
60 - 79	C	Needs some improvement.
30 - 59	D	Requires a lot of work. Maybe better to start from scratch!
0 - 29	F	Uh oh!

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