

Educational Context Paper

Background Information:

In one page¹ (single spaced) address the following areas:

1. Briefly talk about the structure of your placement: What type of school is it (magnet, charter, rural, urban, middle school, elementary, etc.)? What is the typical schedule for this school? What are the demographics—race, class/income, gender, etc.—for the school?
2. Discuss your students: About how many students are in the classes you observe? What system of ability tracking is in place? What do you see in terms of ability variation in the classroom? What are the demographics for the classes you observe? What grade levels are in your classes? About how many students receive special services (ESL, special ed accommodations, etc.)?
3. Discuss the curriculum: What textbooks are used (title, publisher, year)? What other resources are commonly used in the classroom? What teaching strategies are typical in the classrooms you observe?

Narrative:

In one page (single spaced) discuss the following topics *in essay form—do not simply answer questions as you would in a worksheet*:

- Student development: What prior skills do the students bring with them to the classroom? What are their academic needs? Social needs? Language needs?
- Social interaction: How do the students express themselves, form relationships, navigate conflict, interact with the teacher, get along with each other?
- Family and community contexts: What kinds of knowledge from outside of school benefit students? What are their cultural backgrounds? What do you know about their family structures? How is student access to technology? What other home and community resources are available to students or do students regularly use?
- Curriculum and instruction: What is the impact of the curriculum and teaching strategies in the classroom? How do pacing, verbal communication from the teacher, assessments, planning, and other elements of instruction impact the classroom? How does the teacher keep students motivated? How does the teacher make sure to address the academic needs of the students?

Educational Context Paper Scoring Rubric

Criterion	Needs Improvement 1	Adequate 3	Excellent 5	Scoring/Points
Background	Missing topics or extremely brief, needed to gather more information	All topics addressed, some of them too briefly	Extremely thorough discussion of all topics	___ x 2 = ___
Narrative	Missing topics or extremely brief, needed to gather more information	All topics addressed, some of them too briefly	Extremely thorough discussion of all topics	___ x 2 = ___
Communication and Organization	Many errors that hinder comprehension	Errors are in the paper but they do not hinder comprehension	Virtually no errors in the paper, paper is well organized	___ x 1 = ___
Grading: 23-25 A; 20-22 B; 17-19 C; 15-16 D; 0-14 F				Total: ___

¹ Note that the page requirements are **guidelines** only—you may exceed this page amount if needed.