

Essay Evaluation Rubric

Category	Exemplary	Very Good	Competent	Developing	Unacceptable
<p>Thesis. How well has the author articulated the central thesis or topic of the paper? Has the author properly addressed relevant theoretical constructs?</p>	Makes a strong, insightful assertion that addresses the theoretical construct clearly and moves beyond the predictable. Takes a risk and explores issues thoughtfully and in depth.	Promising; demonstrates insight into the topic, but the assertion is predictable or merely reflects class ideas.	Demonstrates some insight into the topic, but may be unclear, contain vague terminology, appear unoriginal, or offer relatively little that is new.	Suggests confusion about the topic and/or neglects important aspects of the problem. Lacks focus or demonstrates confused or simplistic thinking. The thesis is difficult to identify.	Has no identifiable thesis or utterly incompetent thesis. Thesis shows lack of effort or comprehension of the assignment.
<p>Organization. How well has the author organized the essay to facilitate fluid readability and clarity of content?</p>	Has an evident, understandable, and sophisticated organization. Body paragraphs relate back to thesis. Paragraphs flow seamlessly and support solid topic sentences.	Generally clear and appropriate organization, though may wander occasionally. Paragraphs have all key parts. Essay may have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.	Essay has adequate organization but is often unclear, wanders, or jumps around. Some weak transitions and paragraphs without topic sentences.	Weak organization makes argument unclear. Body paragraphs need clearer relation to thesis. Paragraphs are missing key parts such as topic sentences. Transitions are confusing.	Poor organization makes basic comprehension difficult.
<p>Use of Evidence. How well has the author used reliable evidence in the essay to support the stated thesis? Has the author properly integrated and cited supporting evidence?</p>	Uses significant, rich, detail that proves thesis. Essay contains several main ideas that support thesis. Primary source information used to buttress every point with at least one example. Integration of quoted material is excellent.	Uses solid details and examples to support most points, but occasionally could be extended to show more understanding. Some information does not support points, or may appear where inappropriate. Quotes well integrated.	Uses a few details or examples to support some points, but often could be extended to show more understanding. Points often lack supporting evidence, or evidence is used where inappropriate. Quotes are adequately integrated.	Lacks concrete, relevant details or quotes that prove thesis. Essay provides simplistic generalizations. General failure to support statements, or evidence seems to support no statement. Quotes poorly integrated.	Lacks details, examples, or quotes to support thesis.
<p>Analysis. How well has the author analyzed the chosen content and interpreted it according to the thesis?</p>	Analysis is fresh and exciting; interprets details, quotes, and examples, shows how they relate to the thesis, and poses new ways to think about the material. Evidence is clearly related to topic sentences.	Analysis explains significance of details, but could be expanded to show stronger connection to thesis or provide more insight about the details. Evidence often related to topic sentences, though links perhaps not always clear.	Analysis occasionally fails to explain significance of details and often needs to be expanded to show stronger connection to thesis. Quotes often appear without analysis relating them to topic sentences.	Analysis is predictable, disconnected, and tends to summarize instead of analyze. Essay shows very little or very weak attempt to relate evidence to argument.	Analysis is lacking. Almost no attempt is made to relate evidence to argument.
<p>Logic and Argumentation. How well has the author made his/her argument? Has the author anticipated counter-arguments, drawn upon outside material, and thoroughly illuminated the thesis?</p>	All ideas in the paper flow logically. The argument is identifiable, reasonable, and sound. Author anticipates and successfully defuses counter-arguments; makes novel connections to outside material, which illuminate thesis.	Argument is clear and usually flows logically. Some acknowledgement of counter-arguments without being fully addressed. Occasional insightful connections to outside material made.	Logic may often fail, or argument may often be unclear. May not address counter-arguments or make any outside connections.	Ideas do not flow, usually because there is little argument to support. Essay shows simplistic view of the topic; no effort to grasp possible alternative views.	Essay shows poor logic or non-existent argumentation.

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<p>Style. How well does the author's voice communicate the content? Is the essay pleasurable to read (even if you may disagree with their argument)?</p>	Language is natural and captures the writer's voice. Striking, vivid words catch the reader's eye. Shows mastery over a variety of sentence openers and structures and uses them appropriately.	Language is generally natural, but does not consistently reflect unique voice. Essay exhibits a good use of active verbs and strong words with the occasional lapse into weak verbs. It contains a varied sentence structure.	Language is adequate, but does not reflect unique voice. Some use of active verbs and strong words with frequent lapses into weak verbs. Contains some varied sentence structure, but most sentences follow subject-verb pattern.	Language is largely formulaic, or includes wordy expressions and too much repetition of common verbs. Essay does not contain much sentence variety.	Language is entirely formulaic. Essay does not contain sentence variety.
<p>Mechanics. How well did the author demonstrate a good grasp of standard writing conventions (e.g. spelling, punctuation, grammar) and use conventions effectively to enhance readability?</p>	Sentence structure and diction are excellent. Correct use of punctuation and citation style. Minimal spelling errors, run-on sentences, or comma splices.	Sentence structure and grammar are strong despite occasional lapses. Punctuation and citation style often used correctly. Few spelling errors, run-on sentences, or comma splices.	Problems in sentence structure and grammar (usually minor). Errors in punctuation and citation style. May have several spellings errors, run-on sentences, or comma splices.	Significant issues in sentence structure and grammar. Frequent errors in punctuation and citation style. May have many spelling errors, run-on sentences, and comma splices.	Poor sentence structure and grammar, causing serious legibility issues. Citations missing. Major errors in punctuation and spelling.
<p>Additional Comments</p>					
<p>Final Evaluation</p>					