

Short Paper Rubric

	Accomplished (5)	Competent (4)	Developing (3)	Beginning (2)
Focus	Provides an arguable, specific, and unique thesis statement. Conveys a convincing and innovative connection between the two texts. Sustains this controlling idea (thesis) throughout the essay.	Provides an arguable thesis statement. Conveys a connection between the two texts, but it may not be particularly original. Mostly maintains focus on this idea (thesis) throughout the essay, although it may sometimes stray.	Attempts to provide a thesis statement, but it may not be arguable. Connection between texts remains vague and undeveloped. Paragraphs do not consistently relate to central idea (thesis).	No identifiable claim/thesis statement, or does not compare two texts. Little or no coherence to the essay.
Development	Skillfully interweaves passages from literature as well as strong personal statements that illustrate main point of essay. Appropriately cites quotations using MLA style.	Incorporates passages from literary texts as well as some strong personal statements to prove thesis. Provides citations for quotations but may have some small errors.	Rarely provides specific passages from literary texts, or fails to provide coherent explanation of passages. Might simply repeat class discussion. Citations may be inadequate or absent.	Uses irrelevant or little evidence from text, or does not provide enough explanation to convey understanding. Might rely too heavily on personal, anecdotal evidence or plot summary.
Organization	Employs an appropriate and logical organizational structure that seems effortless because of smooth transitions and topic sentences.	Employs clear paragraphing and logical sequence of topics.	Employs reasonable paragraphing, but may sometimes be difficult to follow. Introduction or conclusion could be stronger.	Does not divide essay into paragraphs, or sequence of topics is not logical, or discussion is so repetitive that the paragraphing is not helpful.
Mechanics	Uses graceful language that skillfully communicates meaning to readers with clarity and fluency, and is virtually error-free. Response is more than 500 words.	Uses straightforward language that generally conveys meaning to readers. The language has few errors. Response is at least 500 words.	Uses language that generally conveys meaning with clarity, although writing may include some errors. Response is at least 400 words.	Uses language that sometimes impedes meaning because of errors in usage. Response is less than 400 words.

