

Appendix C

A Guide for Grading Student Writing**I. Point/Thesis/Idea**

- A The writer's point/purpose is very clear; one thoughtful idea clearly dominates the essay.
- B The writer's point/purpose is fairly clear; there are related passages, but a thoughtful, point/purpose is not sustained throughout the paper.
- C There is some attempt to delineate a point/purpose, but it is not successful or not sustained throughout the paper.
- F The dominant idea is not clear; there is no apparent guiding principle or point to the essay.

II. Development/Support/Evidence

- A There is imaginative use of and an adequate amount of proof/support for the author's point(s). There is effective and accurate use of sources, and the author demonstrates the ability to integrate the source material logically and responsibly into the essay.
- B There is effective use and an adequate amount of proof/support for the writer's ideas. The use of sources is adequate, and the writer attempts to integrate sources logically and responsibly into the essay.
- C The examples/explanations are either inadequate to support the writer's ideas, or are not effective. There has been some attempt to use sources, but there may be evidence of merely token integration of the ideas from the readings.
- F The evidence given to prove or support the writer's idea(s) or point(s) is inadequate, ineffective, or inappropriate. The author has not attempted to use sources, has not documented sources (plagiarism), or has merely summarized the readings.

III. Organization/Logic/Coherence

- A The organizational pattern is logical, easy to follow and theoretically convincing; the essay works well as a whole.
- B The organizational pattern gives coherence at the overall paper level, but there are some internal coherence problems (e.g., transitions between paragraphs are not smooth).
- C The organizational pattern is barely discernible or is illogical; an attempt at coherence is evident, but overall there is little coherence in the ideas (e.g., each paragraph is coherent, but there is little or questionable overall coherence).

- F There is no logical pattern of organization evident; the paper rambles from one topic to another without connecting them. There is no overall coherence.

IV. Usage/Mechanics/Documentation

- A The paper's usage, mechanics, and documentation are virtually error-free.
- B There are occasional errors in spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence logic, etc.; the documentation is correctly done.
- C The reader was distracted by frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence logic, etc., or there were many errors of one type. The documentation is incorrect or inadequate.
- F The reader was greatly distracted by many errors in spelling, punctuation, diction, sentence logic, and was unable to make sense of the text in more instances than not. The documentation is incorrect or inadequate.

Grading Criteria Relating to Writing Skills

An "A" paper has all of these virtues:

- An introduction that gets the reader ready and willing to read the paper;
- A well-focused and interesting thesis;
- Unified, originally developed, coherent paragraphs that support the thesis;
- A logical organization signaled by graceful transitions;
- A conclusion that goes beyond restating the obvious;
- A clear pleasant style;
- And completely standard usage. (One small error per page may not affect the grade.)

In addition, it must meet all of the assignment's requirements.

A "B" paper has all of these strengths:

- A useful introduction;
- A focused and supportable thesis;
- Unified, developed, coherent paragraphs that support the thesis;
- A logical organization signaled by appropriate transitions;
- A competent conclusion;
- A clear style;
- And usually standard usage. (Several errors of one kind or a few different errors may not affect the grade.)

It should also meet the assignment's requirements. Another way to write a "B" paper is to meet some but not all of the criteria for an "A" paper.

A “C” paper has some but not many of these weaknesses;

- An overly general introduction;
- A vague thesis;
- Some underdeveloped paragraphs or not fully coherent ones;
- Ineffective organization and/or transitions;
- An inadequate conclusion;
- A style that impedes understanding;

It should attempt to meet the assignment’s requirements. Another way to write a “C” paper is to meet some but not all of the criteria for a “B” paper.

An “F” paper has more than one of these vices:

- No introduction;
- No thesis;
- Random paragraphing;
- No organization;
- No conclusion;
- An unreadable style;
- Or many different serious deviations from standard usage.

Another way to write an “F” paper is to ignore some of the assignment’s requirements or exhibit too many of the weaknesses characteristic of a “C” paper.

Questions to Help Instructors and Students Evaluate Papers

Is the **title** appropriate and effective?

Does the **introduction** identify and limit the topic?

Does the introduction include a clearly stated thesis (main point)?

Does the introduction establish that the topic is significant?

Does the introduction tell what or how ideas will be presented?

Does the introduction create reader interest?

Does the introduction get reader acceptance (have ethical appeal)?

Does the introduction state the author’s bias?

Does the **conclusion** echo the thesis (main point)?

Does the conclusion do the necessary summing up of the paper?

Does the conclusion state implications, draw conclusions, or call for action?

Does the **whole paper** have **unity** of thought?

Does the paper move and is that movement in one, logical direction?

Do the topic sentences of all paragraphs support the thesis?

Is there one subject, one controlling attitude, one tone?

Does the **whole paper** have **coherence**?

Does the presentation of ideas follow the blueprint/map in the introduction?

Are transitions appropriate, effective, and smooth?

Is the point of view consistent (first, second, or third person)?

Is the paper's **thesis** supported?

Does each paragraph in the body give specific facts or support for the thesis?

Is the support logical and the coverage complete and convincing?

Does the support consist of definitions, details, illustrations, reasons, comparisons, or other acceptable evidence?

Do **paragraphs** have **unity**? Do all sentences deal with one topic?

Do they have **coherence**? Are sentences arranged in a logical way?

Is **sentence** structure and word order correct?

Is sentence length and sentence pattern varied?

Are **words** correct and precise?

Are words consistent with subject, purpose, and audience (tone)?

Are words specific, concrete?

Are verbs active, strong and meaningful?

Have trite expressions and clichés been eliminated?

Has wordiness been eliminated?

Are **spelling** and **punctuation** correct?

Have grammatical errors been eliminated?

Is the approach to the subject **creative**?

Are thought and expression **original**?