

Marking Rubric, based on “Guidelines for Writing Papers” document

Here are common things I look for when marking; this is not exhaustive, but has common issues students run into. There may be more that goes into your overall essay mark than this, b/c no rubric can capture all aspects of every possible essay.

		(1) Outstanding	(2) Good	(3) Adequate	(4) Inadequate
S T R E N G T H O F A R G U M E N T	ARG	Thesis is supported excellently—the arguments in the essay work well together to support the thesis; the claims in these arguments are themselves supported well	Thesis is mostly defended well, but one small part isn’t supported, or one or two of the arguments for it need a bit more support or explanation	1-2 important parts of thesis need further support (textual or other evidence), or several claims in the arguments for the thesis given too quickly, w/little support	The points given in the paper do not support the thesis, or there are major gaps where aspects of the thesis or arguments for it are left undefended, or it’s difficult to tell what you are arguing for & how
	EVID	Adequate textual evidence provided for your claims about the text	Adequate textual evidence provided for your claims about the text(s) in most places, but need more in 1-2 places	More textual evidence is needed in several places	Very little to no textual evidence is provided
	ACC	No inaccuracies in discussion of texts, &/or non-standard interpretations defended well	Mostly accurate discussion of claims and arguments from texts, but 1-2 minor inaccuracies; or, controversial or non-standard interpretations of texts need a bit more defense	A few inaccuracies in the discussion of the texts, or controversial or non-standard interpretations of texts not defended as well as they should be	Many points in discussion of texts are inaccurate, or controversial interpretations hardly or not defended at all
	EXPL	Explanations of arguments in texts or your own arguments clarify the views well, given audience requirement	Could use a bit more explanation of arguments in the texts or your own arguments to clarify them, given audience requirement	Need significantly more explanation of the texts or your own arguments to clarify the views, given audience requirement	Little to no explanation of the texts or your own arguments to clarify them
	OBJ	No significant objections, or they are answered well	A minor objection seems immediately clear that should be addressed	A few minor objections, and/or a more serious objection to the argument needs to be addressed	There are objections that weaken the argument for the thesis so much that thorough revision is required to fix it
I N S I G H T	INS	Creative, original thesis, argument, and interpretations of texts that spark new ideas and questions in the reader beyond what is in the texts and lectures; takes risks and reflects deep thought and effort	Thesis, arguments, &/or interpretations of texts reflect some original thought, but could use more	There is not much evidence of original thought or interpretations, or the arguments in the essay focus on was given in class or in the texts, or the interpretations are pretty clear to most readers on a first read	The essay attempts to repeat arguments or ideas from texts or lectures/discussions, or attempts to give an original argument, but shows a serious lack of understanding of the material in either case

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		(1) Outstanding	(2) Good	(3) Adequate	(4) Inadequate
O R G A N I Z A T I O N	THESIS	Thesis is clear and accurately reflects the main argument in the essay	Thesis statement is vague, or the essay argues something slightly different	Thesis is hard to find and/or difficult to understand	There seems to be no thesis statement at all
	ORDER	Points are linked in an order that reveals well how they work together to support the thesis	One or two paragraphs should be moved to a different part of the essay to improve the argument flow, or one paragraph goes a bit off topic	It's somewhat difficult to follow the thread of the argument in the essay, to see why the paragraphs should be in this order (though with effort the thread can be found), or the essay makes some points disconnected from thesis	Points seem to be listed somewhat randomly rather than having clear transitions and a logical order
	PARA	Paragraphs are coherent, with good topic sentences	One or two paragraphs could be better organized internally, or missing topic sentences for 1-2 of them	It's hard to follow the internal organizational structure of several paragraphs, or several paragraphs missing topic sentences	The essay is not broken up into coherent paragraphs for different points
	TRANS	Excellent transitions between paragraphs	Missing one or two transitions between paragraphs	Missing transitions between many paragraphs	Missing transitions throughout
	I&C	There is an engaging introduction and a conclusion that rounds out the essay well	One or two problems with intro or conclusion	Significant problems with intro or conclusion (e.g., both include arguments that should be in the body of the essay; they don't read like intro or conclusion at all)	There is no intro or no conclusion; (e.g., the essay may stop in the middle of an argument)
S T Y L E & M E C H	GRAM	Very few to no typos, spelling, grammatical or punctuation mistakes	A few typos, spelling, grammatical, or punctuation mistakes	Frequent typos, spelling, grammatical, or punctuation mistakes	Enough typos, spelling, grammatical or punctuation mistakes to make the essay difficult to read and understand
	STYLE	Style is clear and easy to read; author's voice comes through well; sentences flow well; little to no awkward wording	A minor problem with style, such as a few awkward sentences/ words, a few repeated words/phrases author's voice doesn't come through as well as it could	Significant problems with the style, such as frequent awkward sentences/words, frequent repeated words/phrases, or other problems with style that make for some difficulty reading	Serious problems with the style that make the essay difficult to understand
	CIT	Citations given where needed & formatted correctly, incl. works cited list		1-2 citations not given where needed and/or formatted incorrectly	Several places where citations not given where needed and/or formatted incorrectly; or no works cited list
	TOPIC	All parts of the topic addressed (where following a topic is required)		One part of the topic not addressed well (where following a topic is required)	The topic is hardly addressed at all (where following a topic is required)