

	D-F	Low Average C-/C	High Average B-/C+	Very Good B/B+	Superior A-/A
<b>Thesis:</b>		Difficult to identify at all, may be bland restatement of obvious point.	May be unclear (contain many vague terms), appear unoriginal, or offer relatively little that is new; provides little around which to structure the paper. Paper title and thesis do not connect well or title is unimaginative.	Promising, but may be slightly unclear, or lacking in insight or originality. Paper title does not connect as well with thesis or is not as interesting.	Easily identifiable, plausible, novel, sophisticated, insightful, crystal clear. Connects well with paper title.
<b>Structure:</b>		Unclear, often because thesis is weak or non-existent. Transitions confusing and unclear. Few topic sentences.	Generally unclear, often wanders or jumps around. Few or weak transitions, many paragraphs without topic sentences.	Generally clear and appropriate, though may wander occasionally. May have a few unclear transitions, or a few paragraphs without strong topic sentences.	Evident, understandable, appropriate for thesis. Excellent transitions from point to point. Paragraphs support solid topic sentences.
<b>Use of Evidence</b>		Very few or very weak examples. General failure to support statements, or evidence seems to support no statement. Quotes not integrated into sentences; "plopped in" in improper manner. Demonstrates a little understanding of (or occasionally misreads) the ideas in the assigned reading and does not critically evaluates/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.	Examples used to support some points. Points often lack supporting evidence, or evidence used where inappropriate (often because there may be no clear point). Quotes may be poorly integrated into sentences. Demonstrates a general understanding of the ideas in the assigned reading and only occasionally critically evaluates/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.	Examples used to support most points. Some evidence does not support point, or may appear where inappropriate. Quotes well integrated into sentences. Demonstrates a solid understanding of the ideas in the assigned reading and critically evaluates/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.	Primary source information used to buttress every point with at least one example. Examples support mini-thesis and fit within paragraph. Excellent integration of quoted material into sentences. Demonstrates an in depth understanding of the ideas in the assigned reading and critically evaluates/responds to those ideas in an analytical, persuasive manner.
<b>Analysis</b>		Very little or very weak attempt to relate evidence to argument; may be no identifiable argument, or no evidence to relate it to. More description than critical thinking.	Quotes appear often without analysis relating them to mini-thesis (or there is a weak mini-thesis to support), or analysis offers nothing beyond the quote. Even balance between critical thinking and description.	Evidence often related to mini-thesis, though links perhaps not very clear. Some description, but more critical thinking.	Author clearly relates evidence to "mini-thesis" (topic sentence); analysis is fresh and exciting, posing new ways to think of the material. Work displays critical thinking and avoids simplistic description or summary of information.
<b>Logic and Argumentation</b>		Ideas do not flow at all, usually because there is no argument to support. Simplistic view of topic; no effort to grasp possible alternative views. Does not create appropriate college level, academic tone, and has informal language or inappropriate slang.	Logic may often fail, or argument may often be unclear. May not address counter-arguments or make any outside connections. Occasionally creates appropriate college level, academic tone, but has some informal language or inappropriate slang.	Argument of paper is clear, usually flows logically and makes sense. Some evidence that counter-arguments acknowledged, though perhaps not addressed. Occasional insightful connections to outside material made. Mostly creates appropriate college level, academic tone.	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 (from other parts of the class, or other classes), which illuminate thesis. Creates appropriate college level, academic tone.
<b>Mechanics:</b>		Larger problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction. Frequent major errors in citation style, punctuation, and spelling. May have many run-on sentences and comma splices. Does not conform to format requirements.	Problems in sentence structure, grammar, and diction (usually not major). Some errors in punctuation, citation style, and spelling. May have some run-on sentences or comma splices. Conforms in almost every way to format requirements.	Sentence structure, grammar, and diction strong despite occasional lapses; punctuation and citation style often used correctly. Some (minor) spelling errors; may have one run-on sentence or comma splice. Conforms in every way to format requirements.	Sentence structure, grammar, and diction excellent; correct use of punctuation and citation style; no spelling errors; absolutely no run-on sentences or comma splices. Conforms in every way to format requirements.

## ***Essay Checklist for Students***

### **Does Your Paper Match the Assignment?**

The best papers clearly "match" the assignments.

#### **Has your paper been written....**

- .. exactly following any outline or structure provided to you?
- .. in direct response to the assigned topic(s), prompts or questions?
- .. as a formal essay, with a thesis statement, concrete example, quotes, analysis, and a thought-provoking conclusion.

### **Is There a Clear Thesis?**

A great paper should have a clear and well-written thesis statement. A thesis can either be a clear claim about a topic or a clear research question.

#### **Does your paper have a thesis which ...**

- .. clearly states your argument?
- .. is specific?
- .. will appeal to readers
- .. has solid research behind it?
- .. is assertive/sure of itself?
- .. is complex enough so that it is not already self-evident?
- .. appears prominently and early (introduction) in your paper?

### **Does Your Paper Keep its “Eyes on the Prize”?**

Essays should stay on target – even after the thesis. A well-focused paper will follow clearly first from the thesis and then from one idea to the next, avoid unclear digressions, and its different parts will all be relevant to the thesis/claim you are making.

#### **Does your whole paper ....**

- .. focus clearly on the argument you laid out in your thesis and introduction?
- .. exclude any irrelevant details and information?
- .. avoid going off on tangents (get off topic or change to a new topic)
- .. clearly show the relationships between its different parts?
- .. make good organizational sense?

### **Are the arguments and ideas “complete” enough?**

Great papers provide complete “full” introductions and thoroughly supported arguments.

#### **For example, ...**

- .. does the introduction fully describe the argument?
- .. does the introduction give a solid basis for the rest of your ideas?
- .. do you provide ample information to make readers confident that you “know what you are talking about”?
- .. is your argument presented and explained in very specific terms?
- .. is the development of your argument easy to follow because its logical.
- .. do you give examples and details so that your readers can actually see what you mean?

- .. do you quote enough to provide concrete evidence for your argument?
- .. is the text you quote relevant to the point you are trying to make?
- .. do you follow up every quotation from your research with analysis (to help readers understand how each quotation provides support for the argument)?
- .. do you use plenty of connections and transitions to make the direction of the paper clear?

### **Is your presentation professional?**

Formal papers should be “professional” and polished pieces of writing.

#### **Has your paper been ....**

- .. carefully edited?
- .. revised for error-free spelling and punctuation?
- .. revised to avoid awkward sentences?
- .. checked for appropriate diction (word choice)?
- .. edited to be sure the prose is clear and smooth?
- .. written with sentences varied in style and length?

Peer Review – *Introduction*     *Paper Author* \_\_\_\_\_ *Your Name* \_\_\_\_\_

Can you identify the topic easily – if so what is it?	
How could the writer make the topic more obvious?	
Does the introduction clearly state the paper’s goal/ purpose? If so, what is it?	
Is there a clear thesis? What is it?	
How could the thesis be clearer?	
Does the Introduction “match” the body by mentioning the main points it will make or topics it will cover?	

Is there anything that seems out of place in the intro that you would remove? If yes, what?	
Is there any major idea or point you would add? If so, explain.	
Is the “flow” of ideas logical? Would you move any sentences around? Explain.	
Are the spelling, grammar and punctuation all correct?	