

# GRADING RUBRIC

## A—EXCELLENT—An Exceptional Essay

### Organization and Development

- Addresses the assignment thoroughly and analytically, developing an authentic, fresh insight that challenges readers' thinking
- Displays awareness of and sense of purpose in communicating to an audience and, therefore, provides adequate context for readers (i.e. necessary background information, brief summaries, or definitions of key terms, etc.)
- Presents a clearly focused and sufficiently narrowed controlling idea (thesis)
- Provides logical progression of ideas through clear, effective transitions and topic sentences that clearly maintain focus while advancing discussion
- Evaluates and analyzes ideas and issues skillfully using sound reasoning

### Presentation of Research

- Offers compelling support and sophisticated insight through persuasive evidence
- Makes clear distinctions between student's ideas and ideas of others
- Incorporates the ideas of others effectively, accurately, and logically through summary, paraphrase, and/or direct quotation as instructed
- Uses sources to support, extend, and inform ideas, not to substitute for the writer's own development of an idea
- Does not overuse quoted material to substitute for the writer's own development of an idea
- Adheres to current MLA guidelines for formatting essays and, as instructed, documents all ideas cited through summary, paraphrase, or direct quotation with accurate in-text citations and a Works Cited page that adheres to MLA guidelines

### Mechanics

- Displays superior, consistent control of syntax (word order), sentence variety (varies length and complexity), diction (effective word choice), punctuation, grammar, spelling, and conventions of Standard English

## B—STRONG—An Above Average Essay

### Organization and Development

- Addresses the assignment clearly and analytically, setting a meaningful task
- Addresses audience needs and expectations by providing adequate context
- Presents a clearly focused controlling idea (thesis)
- Demonstrates clear and coherent organization through use of good transitions and topic sentences that keep focus clearly in sight
- Evaluates and analyzes ideas and issues carefully (but not with the skill or sophistication of an A essay)

### Presentation of Research

- Provides effective support and analysis through examples or facts (that will not be as compelling or as strong as an A essay)
- Makes distinctions between student's ideas and ideas of others
- Demonstrates an ability to effectively use summary, paraphrase, or direct quotation when appropriate (and/or requested by instructor)
- Uses sources to support, extend, and inform ideas, not to substitute for the writer's own development of an idea
- Does not overuse quoted material to substitute for the writer's own development of an idea
- Cites relevant sources, effectively integrating them into text when appropriate using current MLA guidelines for in-text citations and Works Cited
- Adheres to current MLA guidelines for formatting

### Mechanics

- Displays consistent control of syntax (word order), sentence variety (varies length and complexity), diction (effective word choice), punctuation, grammar, spelling, and conventions of Standard English

## C—SATISFACTORY—An Adequate Essay

### Organization and Development

- Addresses the assignment with some analysis
- Addresses some audience needs and expectations
- Establishes a controlling idea (thesis)
- Demonstrates adequate organization with some attempt at transitions (the focus may not be as clearly maintained as in the A and B essay)
- Provides some analysis of ideas and issues (but the analysis may be weak or not fully developed)

### Presentation of Research

- Provides some support through use of examples and details (that will be less developed and less persuasive than the A and B essay)
- Makes an attempt to show distinction between student's ideas and ideas of others though cited material may, at times, crowd out student's voice and ideas
- Adequately uses ideas of others (when required) through summary, paraphrase, and direct quotations, but presentation and integration of these ideas is less accurate and less skillful than in the A and B essay
- Cites appropriate sources when necessary and adequately integrates them into text using MLA guidelines for in-text citations and Works Cited

### Mechanics

- Displays adequate control of syntax (word order), sentence variety (varies length and complexity), diction (effective word choice), punctuation, grammar, spelling, and conventions of Standard English (errors do not slow the reader, impede understanding, or seriously undermine the authority of the writer)

## D—UNSATISFACTORY—A Seriously Flawed Essay

### Organization and Development

- May address only parts of or all of the assignment but does so inadequately
- Shows insufficient awareness of audience needs and expectations
- Thesis may be unclear and/or not function as controlling idea of essay
- Lacks focus and a clear pattern of organization which may occur for the following reasons: writer lacks clear understanding of essay structure; topic sentences are nonexistent or random; lack of or inappropriate transitions
- Paragraph structure will be flawed due to lack of development, lack of a clear focus, and/or lack of a clear understanding of appropriate paragraph breaks
- Analysis of ideas is inadequate or nonexistent

### Presentation of Research

- Support of claims is inadequate or nonexistent
- Unable to make clear distinctions between student's ideas and ideas of others
- Unable to adequately summarize or paraphrase others ideas when instructed to do so
- Fails to cite sources or cites and/or integrates them incorrectly, or inaccurately, or uses inappropriate quotes altogether (when instructed to use outside sources)
- Fails to follow correct MLA guidelines for formatting essays (and for Works Cited when appropriate)

### Mechanics

- Lacks sufficient control of syntax (word order), sentence variety (varies length and complexity), diction (effective word choice), punctuation, grammar, spelling, and/or conventions of Standard English (errors do slow down reading and impede understanding)

## F—FAILING—A Fundamentally Deficient Essay

### Organization and Development

- Fails to address assignment or does so minimally
- Demonstrates a lack of audience awareness
- Lacks a controlling idea (thesis)
- Lacks focus and organization or organizes illogically
- Paragraphing inadequate or nonexistent

### Presentation of Research

- Displays inability to support ideas

- Fails to make distinctions between student's ideas and ideas of others
- Fails to use outside sources appropriately (when required) or plagiarizes

**Mechanics**

- Lacks control of syntax (word order), sentence variety (varies length and complexity), diction (word choice), punctuation, grammar, spelling, and conventions of Standard English (errors greatly impede understanding)