

Sample Grading Criteria

Short Essay Grading Criteria

A (90-100): Thesis is clearly presented in first paragraph. Every subsequent paragraph contributes significantly to the development of the thesis. Final paragraph "pulls together" the body of the essay and demonstrates how the essay as a whole has supported the thesis. In terms of both style and content, the essay is a pleasure to read; ideas are brought forth with clarity and follow each other logically and effortlessly. Essay is virtually free of misspellings, sentence fragments, fused sentences, comma splices, semicolon errors, wrong word choices, and paragraphing errors.

B (80-89): Thesis is clearly presented in first paragraph. Every subsequent paragraph contributes significantly to the development of the thesis. Final paragraph "pulls together" the body of the essay and demonstrates how the essay as a whole has supported the thesis. In terms of style and content, the essay is still clear and progresses logically, but the essay is somewhat weaker due to awkward word choice, sentence structure, or organization. Essay may have a few (approximately 3) instances of misspellings, sentence fragments, fused sentences, comma splices, semicolon errors, wrong word choices, and paragraphing errors.

C (70-79): There is a thesis, but the reader may have to hunt for it a bit. All the paragraphs contribute to the thesis, but the organization of these paragraphs is less than clear. Final paragraph simply summarizes essay without successfully integrating the ideas presented into a unified support for thesis. In terms of style and content, the reader is able to discern the intent of the essay and the support for the thesis, but some amount of mental gymnastics and "reading between the lines" is necessary; the essay is not easy to read, but it still has said some important things. Essay may have instances (approximately 6) of misspellings, sentence fragments, fused sentences, comma splices, semicolon errors, wrong word choices, and paragraphing errors.

D (60-69): Thesis is not clear. Individual paragraphs may have interesting insights, but the paragraphs do not work together well in support of the thesis. In terms of style and content, the essay is difficult to read and to understand, but the reader can see there was a (less than successful) effort to engage a meaningful subject. Essay may have several instances (approximately 6) of misspellings, sentence fragments, fused sentences, comma splices, semicolon errors, wrong word choices, and paragraphing errors.