

Paper Writing Rubric

Devised in collaboration between faculty and students, this rubric offers suggestions for categories in which to think as you write your papers. It's a tool, not a checklist.

	Best	Acceptable	Unacceptable
Thesis or Argument	<p>Thesis is clear and goes beyond lecture and readings.</p> <p>Paper uses arguments to change the reader's vision.</p> <p>Paper shows original, unforgettable thinking.</p>	<p>Thesis is clear and provides a solid, consistent focus.</p>	<p>Paper lacks a consistent thesis, instead giving largely unrelated observations.</p> <p>Little evidence of reading or class attendance.</p>
Evidence	<p>The best evidence is used to reinforce thesis.</p> <p>Contrary evidence is considered and refuted.</p> <p>Argumentation with the evidence is acute and appropriate to thesis.</p>	<p>Good evidence is presented to reinforce the thesis.</p> <p>Contrary evidence is considered and refuted.</p>	<p>Sources might be used, but are not related to the paper's substance.</p> <p>Statements are not backed up.</p>
Organization	<p>Order of ideas is clear and compelling.</p> <p>Paper has an inviting introduction and a satisfying and natural conclusion.</p> <p>Transitions guide reader through the paper.</p>	<p>The paper as a whole is logical and moves the reader through with ease.</p>	<p>No discernable organization. Reader feels lost.</p>
Style	<p>Paper is clear and compelling, passionate, but controlled.</p> <p>Style is appropriate for the audience.</p> <p>Writing is striking and creative, yet natural.</p>	<p>Ideas are clearly stated. Style is appropriate for audience.</p>	<p>Style inhibits understanding and is inappropriate for audience.</p>
Grammar and Syntax	<p>Word choice is intentional and enhances the paper's meaning.</p> <p>Grammar and spelling are perfect.</p> <p>Complex text is controlled.</p> <p>Paper is ready to publish.</p>	<p>Paper has correct grammar and mechanics.</p> <p>Word choice is appropriate.</p>	<p>Errors inhibit understanding of the entire paper.</p>
Personal Engagement	<p>The student creatively articulates how and why he/she has been soulfully impacted by the material.</p>	<p>The paper shows how the student has soulfully interacted with the material.</p>	<p>The reader is unclear as to how the student has been impacted or transformed by the material.</p>
Citation Style	<p>Clear attribution and citation enhance rather than hinder the flow and readability of the paper.</p> <p>In-text citations and references list follow the appropriate style guide perfectly.</p>	<p>Paper uses correct citation to document sources both in text and on references list.</p>	<p>The reader is not clear which ideas are the writer's and which come from a supporting text.</p> <p>Sources might be documented, but style is inconsistent or incorrect.</p>
Criteria to be Assigned			
A paper that plagiarizes will receive an automatic F and cannot be rewritten for credit.			

Adapted from:

- Students in The Bush School (Seattle) Essay Writing Class, "Some components of an excellent essay and of an essay in trouble." Fall 2003.
- Erik Simpson, "Grading standards for papers." University of Pennsylvania. <http://www.english.upenn.edu/~esimpson/Teaching/gradstan.html>
- Prof. Ogilvie, "Paper grading standards." University of Massachusetts. http://www-unix.oit.umass.edu/~ogilvie/304/paper_standards.pdf