

	1 Needs Significant Work	2 Needs Work	3 Good	4 Excellent
Assignment	Essay topic does not match the prompt, or the writing fails to fulfill basic requirements of length, format, style, or language	Essay attempts to confine itself to the assigned topic, but does not fulfill all other assigned requirements (e.g. analysis vs. summary)	Essay is mostly adequate in subject, size and scope, and most other assignment requirements are satisfied	Essay gives a thorough response to the assigned prompt, and satisfies or exceeds all other required elements
Organization	No clear organizational structure—Writing lacks focus, cohesion, coherence, and consistency	Sequence of ideas is functional but may make unfocused and / or illogical shifts in argument, or may lack effective transitions	Sequence of ideas and use of transitions is generally effective, but writing may still occasionally lose focus or lack sufficient clarity	Sequencing of ideas and placement of transitions is smooth and effective—Analysis is clear, lucid and focused
Thesis	Thesis argument either engages something other than the assigned topic, or is missing altogether	Although still unfocused and / or vague, thesis attempts with limited success to engage the topic appropriately	Thesis is clear, directly engages the topic, and attempts some level of rhetorical complexity	Thesis is compelling and mature, and ties itself to the paper topic in a clear and complex way
Paragraphs	Writing contains generalizations that lack support and specificity, and / or it uses language that is confused or uncontrolled	Paragraphs may offer sections of garbled analysis, inadequate support, or material that moves off topic	Paragraphs contain mostly solid analysis, but may still occasionally be underdeveloped, nonspecific or awkwardly stated	Paragraphs offer well-developed, insightful analysis in clean, sophisticated language
Sentences	Frequent errors (e.g. verb tense & agreement, punctuation, spelling, frags & run-ons) occur, indicating a low level of sentence control	Recurring mechanical or construction errors appear, and / or sentences may be presented in a disjointed or overly-simplistic manner	Sporadic errors in grammar and sentence structure may occur, but writing generally displays confident sentence control	Few grammatical or editing errors—Writing demonstrates syntactical mastery through varied sentence structure and style