

Analytical/Argumentative Writing Rubric

**C To earn a “C” on an essay, a student must**

1. Respond to the constraints of the assignment.
2.
  - a. Focus on the topic.
  - b. Order the parts logically.
  - c. Develop the parts with sufficient detail.
  - d. Divide the whole into logical paragraphs.
  - e. Develop one clear assertion in each paragraph. (CLAIM)
  - f. Provide evidentiary support from the text for each paragraph. (ILLUSTRATE)
  - g. Provide sufficient analysis of the sign for each paragraph. (ANALYZE)
3. Provide a clear thesis. (The Essay MUST meet this requirement in order to pass)
4. Have a beginning, middle, and end.
5. Provide enough elaboration with appropriate examples and analysis to make the intent understandable.
6. Have sufficient control of standard written English that errors, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, if present, do not cause serious confusion.

**B To earn a “B” on an essay, a student must do 1 and 2 above and**

7. Provide strong opening and closing paragraphs, with a clear purpose and a sophisticated thesis.
8. Recognize complexities and show evidence of serious consideration of the topic.
9. Support most points with appropriate, well-analyzed examples and intelligent arguments.
10. Show clear logical development and organization throughout.
11. Have few errors. If present, they must not interfere with communication.

**A To earn an “A” on an essay, a student must do 1, 2, 7, and 8 above and**

12. Support all points with appropriate, fully analyzed examples and compelling, insightful arguments.
13. Show persuasive logical development and organization throughout.  
Maintain a distinctive voice and consistent viewpoint.
14. Have interesting, varied, logical sentences.
15. Have nearly error-free writing.
16. Answer the “So, what” question.

**D A “D” grade results from**

- Failing to clearly respond to the assignment, or
- A lack of qualities listed in 2 and 3 above, or
- Errors which cause substantial confusion or incoherence.

**F An “F” grade results from**

- Two or more of the faults listed in “D” above.

Please note that the rubric begins with a “C” grade. There is a reason for this. Unlike high school, “A” does not stand for “adequate,” “acceptable,” or even “average.” The “A” grade represents the top-tier of student papers and thought. Similarly, the “C” grade does not represent failure. This grade is the average, median grade one can expect *if* one meets only the requirements of the paper. To earn an “A” or “B” grade students must go beyond the required and expected guidelines set forth. Those grades show exceptional promise and are representative of diligent, thought-provoking, and independent ideas and writing.