

Essay Grading Rubric

A paper: Perhaps the principal characteristic of the A paper is its *rich content*. It shows evidence of intense interpretive thinking. The writer is in command of ideas and evidence presented. Paraphrasing and summarizing are used to good effect.

The A paper is also marked by *stylistic finesse*:

- clear and well developed thesis;
- title and opening paragraph are engaging;
- strong use of transitions;
- phrasing is tight, fresh, and highly specific;
- varied sentence structure
- tone enhances the purposes of the paper.

Finally, the A paper, with its *careful organization and development*, has a feeling of wholeness and unusual clarity.

It makes the reading experience not just a pleasurable, but a memorable one.

B paper: Similar to the A paper, B paper delivers *substantial information*, is substantial in both quantity and interest-value, and is mostly free of mechanical errors. While the paper may include both direct quotations and paraphrases, there may be some errors (as MLA documentation is not yet expected of the student.)

The B paper effectively does the following:

- opening paragraph draws the reader in;
- closing paragraph is both conclusive and thematically related to the opening;
- specific points are logically ordered, well developed, and unified around a clear organizing principle that is apparent early in the paper;
- transitions between the paragraphs are for the most part smooth,
- sentence structures are varied;
- diction of the paper is typically concise and precise;
- occasionally, it even shows distinctiveness – i.e., finesse and memorability.
- Summary is included only when it supports the interpretations.

On the whole, then, the B paper makes the reading experience a pleasurable one, for it offers substantial information with few distractions.

C *paper*: It is generally competent; it meets the assignment, has few mechanical errors, and is reasonably well organized and developed. The actual information it delivers, however, seems thin and unexamined. One reason for this impression is that the paper generally leans more toward summary than interpretation. Many times it does not fully follow the specifics laid out for the paper. Stylistically, the C paper may have other shortcomings as well:

- opening paragraph may do little to draw the reader in;
- final paragraph may offer only a perfunctory wrap-up; the transitions between paragraphs are often inadequate
- sentences, besides being a bit choppy, tend to follow predictable patterns
- diction is occasionally marred by repetitions, redundancy, and imprecision.

The C paper, is adequate, lacks the stylistic finesse and interpretive thought of the A and B papers.

D *paper*: Its treatment and development of the subject are as yet only rudimentary and rather than making an interpretive argument, this paper is a summary. While organization is present, it is neither clear nor effective. Sentences are frequently awkward, ambiguous, and marred by serious mechanical errors. Evidence of careful proofreading is scanty, or nonexistent. The whole piece gives the impression of having been conceived and written in haste.

F *paper*: In addition to the above listed problems, its treatment of the subject is superficial;

its theme lacks discernible organization; its prose is garbled or stylistically primitive. Frequent mechanical errors obscure meaning. In short, the ideas, organization, and style fall far below what is acceptable college writing.