



Grading Criteria for Writing Assignments

Generally speaking, these criteria define the categories essential to the success of an essay. Essays are evaluated based on these elements, each of which must fulfill a specific function to support the overall effectiveness of the essay. Depending on the assignment, certain criteria may be weighted more than others, and the instructor's assignment may establish additional, more specific criteria.

Thesis Statement

The thesis statement is the central idea of the essay that is appropriate for the assignment, gives the essay a controlling sense of purpose, and establishes a sustained and consistent focus. The thesis statement concisely expresses the main idea and previews the supporting ideas.

Audience

The content and style are tailored for the intended audience.

Organization

- **Essay:** An essay demonstrates a logical progression of ideas, provides clear and smooth transitions among ideas, and uses structure appropriate to an academic essay.
- **Body Paragraph Structure:** A body paragraph includes a main idea expressed in a topic sentence strongly tied to the stated thesis, unified supporting details, and clear connections among ideas.
- **Introduction and Conclusion:** An introduction captures the reader's attention, transitions to the topic by giving context or background information, and presents the thesis statement. A conclusion reemphasizes the essay's thesis and main ideas and provides a sense of closure.

Support

- **Development of Ideas:** A well-developed essay supports the thesis with ample evidence; uses a variety of specific examples, quotations, or other details; and explains the evidence to show its connections to the thesis.
- **Level of Thought:** The essay presents clear, sophisticated, insightful ideas that recognize the complexity of the topic without inaccuracies or errors in reasoning.

Expression

- **Use of Standard Written English:** The essay is written in Standard English without errors in sentence boundaries, spelling, punctuation, mechanics, and grammar.
- **Style:** The student writes in a consistent, academic tone, using varied sentence structure and accurate and precise word choice.

Use and Documentation of Sources

The essay accurately quotes and paraphrases credible sources, effectively balances source material with the writer's own ideas, and cites and documents correctly according to the standards of the discipline.

Format

The essay is formatted according to the standards of the discipline.