

Rubric For Assessing Writing

This can be used by the instructor or by the students for self assessment

	Strong work	Needs development	Unsatisfactory
Audience	Assumes audience is student who has familiarity with the text in question but could use still reminding; paper uses evidence to make points rather than to summarize	Spends inappropriate amount of time merely summarizing text or repeating material covered in class, <i>or</i> does not provide sufficient background/assumes too much knowledge of the text	Shows little evidence of having read the text; ideas mostly taken from class notes or class discussion and not developed further
Thesis	Single clear thesis (= answer to the question, What is this paper about?) that would be interesting to someone who had already studied the text	Thesis is either somewhat unclear or all too obvious to most thoughtful readers	No clear thesis, or multiple theses
Introductory paragraph(s)	Avoids inflated generalizations and gratuitous praise; “hooks” the reader; introduces clear thesis; briefly explains how the paper will proceed	Extraneous generalization; connection to thesis not entirely clear; thesis statement not clear; lacks compelling “hook,” or statement of how the paper will proceed	No clear thesis statement or sense of where the paper is going
Paragraphs in body of paper	Each paragraph does one and only one bit of work toward the paper’s goal and is supported by evidence and argumentation	Some paragraphs are “baggy monsters,” trying to do all too much; or some do not support thesis, or are not supported by evidence	Little relationship between paragraphs and thesis, little to no evidence mustered, paragraphs do not work toward the paper’s goal
Argument	All necessary points in proving or developing thesis are made; paper does not assume reader agrees with author but <i>shows</i> the reader why he or she should agree	Some missteps are made in proving or developing thesis; argument only compelling to someone who already agrees; only <i>tells</i> the reader that such-and-such is the case instead of <i>showing</i> the reader	Essay does not break any ground or develop a case
Organization	Argument intelligently ordered and easy to follow, reflected in order of points and paragraphs	Logical flow of argument needs improvement by reordering some points and/or paragraphs	Material is disorganized with no clear logical connection between points and/or paragraphs
Use of Evidence	Draws relevant evidence from close reading of a variety of passages; all quotations cited using MLA format	Evidence drawn from only one or two passages in text; some evidence does not support points made; citations present but not in correct format	Little evidence used; does not support points made; material quoted without citation
Conclusion	Brings the paper full circle, ties all loose ends together; makes a new point that builds on all preceding points, so is a summation rather than a mere summary	Merely summarizes everything that has been said so far, and/or feels abrupt or forced	Simply recycles the introductory paragraph
Mechanics	Nearly flawless grammar, spelling, and word choice; sentences read smoothly and are clear without being wordy	Grammar, spelling, word choice, sentence structure and/or word economy need attention	Serious problems with grammar, spelling, word choice, sentence structure and/or word economy