

Paper Grading Rubric for 750-Word Analytical Essay

I will post all paper comments online next to your paper grade. I assign a grade in each of three main areas. I then look at the combination of those grades to assign a grade for the entire paper. I tend to weigh the command of the assigned material more than the structure (second most important) and the writing mechanics (least important but still influential).

I. Command of the Assigned Readings:

1. **Here are a few of the high-level skills to demonstrate a solid command of the material that differentiate between an A and a B in this section.**

- Make sure to use the assigned readings; we need to work from the same evidence.
- Quote and cite the assigned readings fairly thoroughly to demonstrate that you have mastery of the material. One or two citations per paragraph is generally sufficient.
- Use shorter quotes that integrate more easily into your prose
- Include clear citations that reference page numbers in the assigned books

2. **Here are a few fundamental problems related to the command of the material. If your paper has several of these problems, you likely received a C or lower on the command of your material.**

- Not enough references to the assigned readings: please read the instructions for the paper.
- Reliance on internet sources not assigned for this course: please read the paper instructions.

II Structure of your thoughts:

1. **Here are a few of the high-level writing skills that differentiate between an A and a B in this section.**

- Develop a Title: Use your title to highlight the main point of your thesis. By choosing a title carefully, you indicate the direction of the essay.
- Use topic sentences at the beginning of paragraphs. Use those topic sentences to support your thesis.
- Interconnect thoughts: connect your thoughts to a thesis; interconnect paragraphs to each other, typically in the topic sentence.
- Produce a conclusion that addresses the implications of the thesis or views the thesis from a slightly different chronological perspective.

2. **Here are a few fundamental structural issues. If your paper has problems with these issues, you likely received a C or lower on the structuring of your thoughts.**

- Develop an explanatory thesis statement that outlines the main points of the paper and their logical connection. An explanatory thesis typically explains how or why.
- Failure to develop a thesis statement that outlines the main points and logic of your essay

- Lack of conceptual coherence for each paragraph, which should have a clear focus
- Failure to analyze the material in order to answer the question: explain how and why in your essay. Avoid relying entirely on narration of events. This essay is an analytical essay. Instead of retelling the story, you should construct an argument. The writing center specializes in this type of writing help.
- Failure to use logic to order your thoughts at a high level so that the essay moves in a logical direction as opposed to just a narrative direction.

III Writing mechanics:

1. **Here are the high-level writing skills that differentiate between A and B. If you have many of these problems in your paper, you may even end up with a C or lower in the writing mechanics section.<**

- Edit carefully. Use the writing center or a trusted editor to help you edit. Misspellings, poor word choices, over-reliance on passive voice, use of “this” by itself, wordy prose, poor choice of tenses (use past tense when writing about the past), use of first or second person, and other minor problems contribute to a less-than-professional appearance and clarity in your paper. The writing center, located in Norlin Library and several other locations across the campus, can help you find and eliminate those problems.
- Choose words carefully in order to improve the clarity and to compact your prose. Avoid “get” and contractions in formal writing.
- Avoid "this" by itself. By placing a noun after "this," you increase the precision and coherence of your essay.
- Use “who” instead of “that” when referring to a person.
- Avoid placing the citation information for works in your prose. It clutters up your writing. Put that information in the citation.
- Number your pages so that readers can refer to specific parts of your paper more easily.

2. **Here are a few fundamental writing problems. If your paper has more than one of these problems, you likely received a C or lower on your writing mechanics.**

- Subject-verb disagreement and noun-pronoun disagreement
- Run-on sentences and incomplete sentences
- Non-parallel constructions