

I consider each essay in terms of the following: ideas (content); the arrangement of those ideas (form); the effectiveness of your expression of ideas (style); and the mechanical correctness of your writing (mechanics).

What follows are descriptions of characteristics of A, B, C, D, and F essay writing in English 428. These characteristics apply to your revised drafts:

A--The essay is of outstanding quality in all, or almost all, respects.

It has a clear, concise thesis.

It makes an original, provocative argument that illuminates the text(s) under consideration.

The scope of the essay has been narrowed sufficiently so that the writer can present adequate evidence from the text to support assertions.

The argument is logical, coherent, and well-supported with evidence in the form of both paraphrase and quotes from the text(s).

In a comparison/contrast essay, a balanced, equal analysis of both works is achieved.

MLA format is adhered to in terms of layout, in-text citations, and Works Cited page.

The sentences are clear, smooth, and consistently grammatical.

B--The essay, while living up to many requirements of the ideal essay, nevertheless falls short in one major area.

Perhaps the conclusion is inadequate to give point and significance to the argument.

Or perhaps there is a flaw in logic or incoherence at one point in an otherwise coherent, persuasive argument, or evidence may not be adequate.

Or, in a comparison/contrast essay, both works may not be analyzed in equal depth.

Or, MLA format may not be strictly adhered to.

Or perhaps there are minor grammatical errors sprinkled throughout the text.

C--The essay makes a competent case for a commonplace idea about the literary work.

Perhaps, however, given a significant and original thesis, the essay lacks a sharp focus, so that the argument, though seemingly valid, cannot be supported in any great depth.

Or, the thesis and support may be nothing more than a rehash of class discussion, without original insights or input from the writer.

Or, while the essay states an interesting and seemingly valid case, the presentation of the ideas and/or the evidence is occasionally disorganized, meandering, or otherwise lacking in logical coherence.

Or, there may be little evidence directly cited from the text(s).

Or, in the case of a comparison/contrast essay, balance in the analysis of the compared works may not be fully achieved.

Or, MLA format may be flawed or absent.

Or, in an essay that otherwise would rate a grade of a B, the sentences are consistently awkward, imprecise, or ungrammatical.

The essay does not meet the minimal pages required by the assignment.

D--The essay shows serious and consistent problems in formulating a thesis (in a comparison/contrast essay, there may not be a clear basis for comparison between the

works), pursuing a logical argument, using evidence, using proper format, or maintaining a respectable prose style. Whenever the thesis is lacking in significance, clarity, or validity, the essay should be liable to a substandard grade.

F--The essay shows a complete misunderstanding of the material dealt with.

Or, fails to present the materials in the form of an argument.

Or, it produces no evidence from the text(s).

Or, its prose fails to meet basic requirements of standard written English.

Or, it contains plagiarized material.