

**English 120 Rubric
(Revised 2003)**

An "A" (6) Essay

- a. has a clear, specific, well structured, interesting thesis that directly responds to the topic and forecasts the main ideas of body paragraphs;
- b. smoothly and thoroughly synthesizes information from several readings, using a combination of paraphrase, quotation, and/or summary, and personal examples relevant to the topic;
- c. clearly demonstrates good critical thinking, which means it goes beyond obvious, superficial points to utilize techniques of argument and analysis such as chains of cause and effect, well-reasoned analogies, and logical evaluation of issues or claims;
- d. has a scheme of organization that includes body paragraphs with clearly-stated topic sentences which relate to the thesis without merely repeating the wording of the thesis points, specific explanation of the major points, well- developed examples and/or facts from both readings and personal experience, and smooth transitions from point to point;
- e. has clear, well-structured sentences and demonstrates that the writer can choose words effectively and vary sentences;
- f. shows strong evidence of editing, since the essay is almost entirely free of major grammatical and/or mechanical errors and contains few important minor ones. Cites paraphrases, summaries, and quotations using correct MLA parenthetical references.

A "B" (5) Essay

- a. has a clear, specific, well-structured thesis that responds to the topic and forecasts the main ideas of body paragraphs;
- b. synthesizes information from several readings, using a combination of paraphrase, quotation, and/or summary, and personal examples relevant to the topic, although the application of facts and/or examples may not be as thoroughly explained as in the "A" essay;
- c. demonstrates reasonable critical thinking, which means it makes logical points beyond the obvious and superficial, though the points may be slightly more general or the elements of analysis may not be entirely complete;
- d. has a scheme of organization that includes body paragraphs with clearly-stated topic sentences which relate to the thesis without merely repeating the wording of the thesis points, clear explanation of the major points, specific examples and/or facts from both readings and personal

experience, and clear transition from point to point, although the explanation of points may be less complete, the examples less detailed than the "A" essay, and the paragraphs missing some minor transitions.;

e. has clear, well-structured sentences and demonstrates some effective word choice and sentence variety;

f. shows evidence of editing, since the essay is relatively free of major grammatical and/or mechanical errors and contains few important minor ones. Cites paraphrases, summaries, and quotations using correct MLA parenthetical references.

A "C" (4) Essay

a. has a clear thesis that responds to the topic and forecasts the main ideas of body paragraphs, although the thesis points may be stated more generally than the "B" essay;

b. draws information from at least two readings, using a combination of paraphrase, quotation, and/or summary, and personal examples relevant to the topic, although the facts and/or examples may not be as specifically applied to the writer's points as in the "B" essay;

c. demonstrates basic critical thinking, which means it addresses the topic with clear, logical points, though the points may be more general, superficial, and/or obvious than the "B" essay;

d. has a scheme of organization that includes body paragraphs with clearly stated topic sentences related to the thesis, some explanation of the major points, examples and/or facts from both readings and personal experience, and some transition from point to point, although the explanation of points may be more obvious or general and the examples less detailed than in the "B" essay; topic sentences may simply repeat the wording of the thesis points rather than rephrasing for variety, and transitions may be missing or awkwardly mechanical;

e. has clear sentences, though the word choice may be less precise than in the "B" essay, and the sentence patterns may lack variety;

f. shows some evidence of basic editing, since the essay contains few major grammatical and/or mechanical errors, although it may contain more minor errors than a "B" essay. Cites paraphrases, summaries, and quotations using MLA parenthetical references.

A "D" (3) Essay

a. may have a thesis that is not entirely clear or which does not respond completely to the topic;

- b. may draw information from fewer than two readings, and/or reading references may not be clearly related to the writer's points;
- c. may demonstrate faults in critical thinking, which means all the points may not address the topic, may be too general, or may be unclearly stated;
- d. might have faults in its scheme of organization, which means the topic sentences may be missing, unclear, or unrelated to the thesis, there may be few or no transitions and little explanation of points, and facts and examples may be missing or insufficiently detailed;
- e. may display frequently-imprecise word choice and/or repetitive or flawed sentence patterns;
- f. shows little evidence of editing, since the essay contains many grammatical and/or mechanical errors, both major and minor. Citations may be incomplete or inaccurate.

An "F" (2) Essay

- a. lacks a clear thesis, or the thesis does not respond to the topic;
- b. draws little or no information from the readings related to the writer's points;
- c. demonstrates major faults in critical thinking, which means it may not address the topic or include clear points;
- d. has no clear scheme of organization, which means it may lack topic sentences related to the thesis, transitions, basic explanations, facts, and/or examples;
- e. displays little or no control of syntax or vocabulary;
shows no evidence of editing, since the essay contains numerous grammatical and/or mechanical errors that interfere with the clarity of the essay.