

## Grading

Papers are graded for content and syntax/grammar. Content will vary according to the assignment, but syntax and grammar are constant.

### Grammar

We may divide mistakes in grammar or syntax into Categories I, II, and III. A student who earns an A or a B has consistently demonstrated the ability to write without errors of Categories I and II and with no more than the infrequent errors of Category III. A student who earns a C has likewise consistently shown the ability to write without mistakes of Category I and with only the occasional error in Category II. Students who earn D's or F's may well do so principally because they haven't shown a consistent ability to write without errors of Category I or without frequent errors of Category II.

- **Category I**

Most subject-verb agreement errors; most comma splices; double negatives; wrong indefinite article (a vs. an); incorrect formation of plurals for ordinary nouns; failure to add an -s or -es needed to form the third-person singular simple form of a verb; failure to add the -d or -ed needed for the past tense/participle of a regular verb; errors with have; unnecessary noun/verb endings; omission of 's for possessive; errors in principle parts of verbs; most fragments; gross errors in case; misspellings of very common words, or confusion of common words similar in sound; fused sentences; careless omissions; frequent use of the comma to separate elements dependent on each other; senseless mixed constructions; noncolloquial confusions of adjective or adverb; misuse of the apostrophe; failure to capitalize.

- **Category II**

Noncolloquial errors in pronoun-antecedent arrangement; ambiguous or too-broad uses of pronouns, which may count as a Category I if a crucial ambiguity exists; omission of apostrophe in possessive case of nouns and indefinite pronouns; misused semicolons; dangling or misplaced modifiers that create the ludicrous or the imprecise but not the incomprehensible; shifts of person, number, tense, voice, or mood; omission of commas (or equivalents) with nonrestrictive elements; omission of commas needed in a series; faulty coordination; incomplete or illogical comparisons, which may count as Category I if unresolvable from context; misspellings of words in fairly common use, especially if the misspelling ignores basic phonetics.

- **Category III**

Failure to use possessive before a gerund; minor flaws in parallel structures; fairly subtle faults in pronoun reference; errors in use (or non-use) of commas with introductory elements or coordinating conjunctions; frequent deviations from accepted usage.

### Content

Essays are graded with attention paid to these six qualities:

- **Thesis:** The paper has a clear point to it, a claim about the topic which challenges readers to think and understand more than they already know about the topic.
- **Organization:** The paper provides clear support for the paper's main point, while breaking that support into different parts and approaches. A well-organized paper flows easily and logically from one paragraph to the next, always relating parts to the main thesis by direct statement or clear implication.
- **Development:** Paragraphs continue long enough to make ideas clear, interesting, and convincing to readers.
- **Specificity:** Important ideas are supported in specific terms, fresh details, and concrete examples.
- **Responsiveness:** The paper responds thoroughly to all terms of the assignment and is aimed at the appropriate audience.

- **Presentation:** The paper has been edited to sharpen expression, refine transitions, and emphasize through style the paper's best points. The paper has been proofread and checked for formatting, presenting the student's best effort.

### Scoring

**A = Superior writing.** Your work shows very original, intelligent, and perceptive thought, and all ideas are fully developed and very well-supported. There are only a few minor errors in grammar, none of which would be considered serious. Diction and phrasing are clear.

**B = Good, solid work.** The writing shows some original thought and authentic engagement, and most ideas are developed and well-supported. There are no major, distracting basic errors, and the diction and phrasing are reasonably clear.

**C = Adequate work.** The writing shows some thought and engagement, but the ideas are not well-developed and well-supported. There are a few basic errors, and the diction and phrasing are clear if not as vigorous as they could be. It meets the basic requirements of the assignment, but does not exceed them.

**D = Less than adequate work.** The writing shows some thought but no real engagement with the topic, and the ideas are difficult to understand. There is no clear structure, and the essay is marred by enough basic errors to distract the reader substantially.

**F = The essay does not fulfill what's expected of you.** It shows virtually no thought. It is poorly constructed, and the reader cannot follow the sequence of ideas. The essay is marred by numerous basic errors in grammar, punctuation, usage, and spelling.

### Grades-to-points

A	95
A-	90
B+	89
B	85
B-	80
C+	79
C	75
C-	70
D+	69
D	65
D-	60
F	TBD