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| Here are common things I look for when marking; this is not exhaustive, but has common issues students run into. There may be more that goes into your overall essay mark than this, b/c no rubric can capture all aspects of every possible essay. | | | | | |
|  |  | **(1) Outstanding** | **(2) Good** | **(3) Adequate** | **(4) Inadequate** |
| S  T  R  E  N  G  T  H  O  F  A  R  G  U  M  E  N  T | ARG | Thesis is supported excellently—the arguments in the essay work well together to support the thesis; the claims in these arguments are themselves supported well | Thesis is mostly defended well, but one small part isn’t supported, or one or two of the arguments for it need a bit more support or explanation | 1-2 important parts of thesis need further support (textual or other evidence), or several claims in the arguments for the thesis given too quickly, w/little support | The points given in the paper do not support the thesis, or there are major gaps where aspects of the thesis or arguments for it are left undefended, orit’s difficult to tell what you are arguing for & how |
| EVID | Adequate textual evidence provided for your claims about the text | Adequate textual evidence provided for your claims about the text(s) in most places, but need more in 1-2 places | More textual evidence is needed in several places | Very little to no textual evidence is provided |
| ACC | No inaccuracies in discussion of texts, &/or non-standard interpretations defended well | Mostly accurate discussion of claims and arguments from texts, but 1-2 minor inaccuracies; or, controversial or non-standard interpretations of texts need a bit more defense | A few inaccuracies in the discussion of the texts, or controversial or non-standard interpretations of texts not defended as well as they should be | Many points in discussion of texts are inaccurate, or controversial interpretations hardly or not defended at all |
| EXPL | Explanations of arguments in texts or your own arguments clarify the views well, given audience requirement | Could use a bit more explanation of arguments in the texts or your own arguments to clarify them, given audience requirement | Need significantly more explanation of the texts or your own arguments to clarify the views, given audience requirement | Little to no explanation of the texts or your own arguments to clarify them |
| OBJ | No significant objections, or they are answered well | A minor objection seems immediately clear that should be addressed | A few minor objections, and/or a more serious objection to the argument needs to be addressed | There are objections that weaken the argument for the thesis so much that thorough revision is required to fix it |
| I  N  S  I  G  H  T | INS | Creative, original thesis, argument, and interpretations of texts that spark new ideas and questions in the reader beyond what is in the texts and lectures; takes risks and reflects deep thought and effort | Thesis, arguments, &/or interpretations of texts reflect some original thought, but could use more | There is not much evidence of original thought or interpretations, or the arguments in the essay focus on was given in class or in the texts, or the interpretations are pretty clear to most readers on a first read | The essay attempts to repeat arguments or ideas from texts or lectures/discussions, or attempts to give an original argument, but shows a serious lack of understanding of the material in either case |

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|  |  | **(1) Outstanding** | **(2) Good** | **(3) Adequate** | **(4) Inadequate** |
| O  R  G  A  N  I  Z  A  T  I  O  N | THESIS | Thesis is clear and accurately reflects the main argument in the essay | Thesis statement is vague, or the essay argues something slightly different | Thesis is hard to find and/or difficult to understand | There seems to be no thesis statement at all |
| ORDER | Points are linked in an order that reveals well how they work together to support the thesis | One or two paragraphs should be moved to a different part of the essay to improve the argument flow, or one paragraph goes a bit off topic | It’s somewhat difficult to follow the thread of the argument in the essay, to see why the paragraphs should be in this order (though with effort the thread can be found), or the essay makes some points disconnected from thesis | Points seem to be listed somewhat randomly rather than having clear transitions and a logical order |
| PARA | Paragraphs are coherent, with good topic sentences | One or two paragraphs could be better organized internally, or missing topic sentences for 1-2 of them | It’s hard to follow the internal organizational structure of several paragraphs, or several paragraphs missing topic sentences | The essay is not broken up into coherent paragraphs for different points |
| TRANS | Excellent transitions between paragraphs | Missing one or two transitions between paragraphs | Missing transitions between many paragraphs | Missing transitions throughout |
| I&C | There is an engaging introduction and a conclusion that rounds out the essay well | One or two problems with intro or conclusion | Significant problems with intro or conclusion (e.g., both include arguments that should be in the body of the essay; they don’t read like intro or conclusion at all) | There is no intro or no conclusion; (e.g., the essay may stop in the middle of an argument) |
| S  T  Y  L  E  &  M  E  C  H | GRAM | Very few to no typos, spelling, grammatical or punctuation mistakes | A few typos, spelling, grammatical, or punctuation mistakes | Frequent typos, spelling, grammatical, or punctuation mistakes | Enough typos, spelling, grammatical or punctuation mistakes to make the essay difficult to read and understand |
| STYLE | Style is clear and easy to read; author’s voice comes through well; sentences flow well; little to no awkward wording | A minor problem with style, such as a few awkward sentences/ words, a few repeated words/phrases author’s voice doesn’t come through as well as it could | Significant problems with the style, such as frequent awkward sentences/words, frequent repeated words/phrases, or other problems with style that make for some difficulty reading | Serious problems with the style that make the essay difficult to understand |
| CIT | Citations given where needed & formatted correctly, incl. works cited list |  | 1-2 citations not given where needed and/or formatted incorrectly | Several places where citations not given where needed and/or formatted incorrectly; or no works cited list |
| TOPIC | All parts of the topic addressed (where following a topic is required) |  | One part of the topic not addressed well (where following a topic is required) | The topic is hardly addressed at all (where following a topic is required) |