

Harrington/English 101/Essay Rubric Activity

Directions: Exchange drafts with a partner. Read and on a separate piece of paper with your name and the author's name listed, assign one of the grades below. Include a meaty paragraph or two in which you explain your rationale and evidence for assigning the grade you give. For new Essay #3 revisions, describe how effective the use of secondary sources is in the draft and make suggestions for improvement.

**A+**

The essay is interesting with original content and style. The topic is fully covered with focus on a sustained controlling idea, showing careful analysis when called for. The paragraphs show development and organization, as well as lucid and orderly thinking. Relevant details and examples support the controlling idea and may even introduce keen insight into the topic. Skillfully constructed sentences express complex ideas and relationships. Point of view is established and maintained. The diction is distinctive, characterized by its freshness and clarity. The essay is virtually free of grammatical and mechanical errors.

**A**

The essay is interesting with substantial content and a distinctive style. The topic is fully covered with focus on a controlling idea, showing careful analysis when called for. Paragraphs are developed logically and coherently, with smooth transitions. Relevant details and examples support the controlling idea. Skillfully constructed sentences show variety of expression and thought. Point of view is established and maintained. Diction is less distinctive than a "A+" but is still mature and precise. There are few grammatical and mechanical errors.

**B**

The essay demonstrates competent college level writing. While not as original or interesting as an "A," the essay does address the assigned topic and focuses on a significant controlling idea. When called for, there is some analysis, but it may be thin or generalized. Paragraphs are well developed and unified yet may contain weak transitions or a hasty conclusion. Sufficient and relevant details and examples support the controlling idea although some may be somewhat repetitious or digressive. Sentences show variety in structure and are coherent but lack any distinctive style or complexity. Point of view may be slightly flawed but causes no serious confusion. Diction is clear and appropriate, showing a fair command of language and expression. Grammatical problems appear occasionally but do not hinder the overall flow of the essay. There are few mechanical errors.

**C**

The controlling idea in this essay, though somewhat vague or trivial, is apparent. The writer has some difficulty covering the topic fully, but the overall content does show some attempt to support the controlling idea. While omission of analysis is characteristic of a "C" essay (over-reliance on narration), when in fact attempted, the writer's analysis proves sketchy or clichéd. Paragraphs are obvious but may show thin development, few transitions, or lack of clear planning. The essay relies on generalities for support or uses inconsistent, irrelevant, or repetitious details and examples. Sentences are simple rather than complex both in variety and structure. Coherence and point of view are weak, confused, or abrupt. While word choice is occasionally vague or awkward, the writer has chosen words from a broad and varied vocabulary. Grammatical and mechanical problems are frequent enough to be distracting.

**D**

Obviously, the writer of this essay has attempted to write on a given topic but does not focus on a strong controlling idea. The essay contains serious gaps in reasoning, with no analysis. Paragraphs are poorly planned or even chaotic, lacking transitions or coherence. The essay relies on generalities and lacks specific or relevant details or examples. Sentences are simple and choppy. The writer includes a few complex sentence constructions, yet these may be awkward and confusing. Point of view may shift and impede readability of the essay. Word choice is overly simple, repetitive, or vague. Habitual grammatical or mechanical errors often obscure meaning and flow of essay.