

English Department Essay Rubric

6 An *excellent* essay exhibits most of the following:

- insightful and original response to the prompt
- mastery of the essay format (introduction, body paragraphs with topic sentences and transitions, and a conclusion)
- clear, focused, thought-provoking thesis
- convincing evidence (specific examples, details, facts, proof, and/or relevant quotes) included in each body paragraph
- insightful and perceptive commentary/analysis/interpretation provided to support specific examples
- reflective and thoughtful conclusion
- mature language, sentence structure, and voice
- very few errors in English conventions

Response to informational text: thoughtfully anticipates and addresses the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

Response to literary passages: effectively demonstrates an awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

Persuasive Composition: states and maintains a position, authoritatively defends that position with precise and relevant evidence, and convincingly addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

5 A *strong* essay exhibits most of the following:

- strong response to the prompt
- effective use of the essay format
- clear and focused thesis
- relevant evidence (specific examples, details, facts, proof, and/or relevant quotes) included in each body paragraph
- thoughtful commentary/analysis/interpretation provided to support each body paragraph
- reflective conclusion but may be less insightful than a "6"
- effective language, sentence structure, and voice
- minor errors in written English conventions

Response to informational text: anticipates and addresses the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

Response to literary passages: clearly demonstrates an awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

Persuasive Composition: states and maintains a position, successfully defends that position with precise and relevant evidence, and addresses the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

4 An *adequate* essay exhibits many of the following:

- adequate response to the prompt
- understanding of the essay format
- acceptable thesis statement
- evidence (specific examples, details, facts, proof, and/or relevant quotes) included in each body paragraph
- commentary/analysis/interpretation (may be simplistic)
- general and/or simplistic conclusion with limited reflection beyond the text
- adequate control of the language, but may contain lapses in diction and syntax
- Errors in written English conventions but these errors do not impede the reader's understanding

Response to informational text: addresses the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

Response to literary passages: demonstrates an awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

Persuasive Composition: states and maintains a position, generally defends that position with precise and relevant evidence, and addresses the reader's concerns, biases and expectations.

3 A *basic* essay exhibits the following:

- brief response to the prompt
- basic essay format
- simplistic and/or vague thesis statement
- little or no evidence (specific examples, details, facts, proof, and/or relevant quotes) included in each body paragraph
- brief commentary/analysis/interpretation (may be simplistic)
- basic conclusion with no reflection
- immature language choices and sentence structure
- many errors in written English conventions impede the reader's understanding

Response to informational text: may address the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations, but in a limited manner.

Response to literary passages: may demonstrate an awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

Persuasive Composition: defends a position with little evidence and may address the reader's concerns, biases, and expectations.

2 An *inadequate* essay exhibits the following:

- off topic response
- lack of basic essay format
- no thesis statement
- no evidence (specific examples, details, facts, proof, and/or relevant quotes) included in each body paragraph
- no commentary/analysis/interpretation
- ineffective language choices and sentence structure or voice is not recognizable as student's
- many errors in written English conventions inhibit reader understanding

Response to informational text: does not address the reader's potential misunderstandings, biases, and expectations.

Response to literary passages: does not demonstrate awareness of the author's use of literary and/or stylistic devices.

Persuasive Composition: fails to defend a position with any evidence and fails to address the reader's concerns, biases and expectations.

1 This score is used for essays which have little if any redeeming value.

0 Evidence of plagiarism