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| Analytic Essay Grading Guide | | |
| Score | Criteria | Category |
| A | Essays earning an A effectively demonstrate understanding of the task in the prompt.  Title is unexpected and fully grabs reader’s attention.  Thesis fully answers essay prompt with unique, bold, and arguable insight.  Each body paragraph’s topic sentence sets a clear, powerful path in developing the thesis.  Concrete details are insightful choices and are smoothly embedded into the body paragraphs.  Evidence of research is thorough, credible, and appropriately applicable to the topic.  Analysis shows depth of thought and presents unique, interesting insight.  Powerful vocabulary without inappropriate repetition of key words or phrases; always fresh and interesting.  Excellent sentence flow and variety of sentence structures.  Skillful use of transitions to help create a unified, cohesive piece of writing.  M.L.A. citations are correctly formatted and skillfully embedded so the resource information is seamless.  Works Cited page is virtually error free.  A lively, interesting writer’s voice comes through to the audience. | Exceeds Expectations |
| B | Essays earning a B adequately demonstrate understanding of the task in the prompt.  Title is appropriate to the topic, but lacks inspiration.  Thesis fully answers essay prompt, but lacks the power of the “A” level thesis.  Each body paragraph’s topic sentence logically supports the thesis, but doesn’t add more power.  Concrete details are appropriate, but rather obvious choices; they are appropriately placed in the body paragraph.  Evidence of research is consistently credible and appropriate. Research is applied effectively for the topic.  Analysis is generally good, but a bit obvious at times; writer may not dig deeply enough.  Strong vocabulary that clearly, but not always powerfully, expresses ideas; words or phrases are not repetitive.  Smooth sentence flow and occasionally effective sentence variety.  Correct and adequate use of transitions for unity and cohesiveness.  M.L.A. citations are correctly formatted and embedded.  Works Cited page has few errors.  The writer’s voice comes through to the audience, but falls flat at times. | Meets Expectations |
| C | Essays earning a C demonstrate little success in understanding the task in the prompt.  Title is flat or predictable.  Thesis answers essay prompt, but is tired, clichéd, or safe/bland.  Each body paragraph’s topic sentence supports the thesis, but construction is mechanical.  Concrete details are present, but material is not smoothly embedded.  Evidence of research is present, but not consistently credible, appropriate, or effectively applied.  Analysis is too obvious, superficial, simplistic, or repetitive; ideas are not taken very far.  Average, simple vocabulary or overly flowery language blocks meaning at times.  Sentence flow is choppy at times; limited sentence variety.  Limited use of transitions; at times, an inappropriate transition is used or is missing altogether  M.L.A. citations are correctly formatted for the most part, but embedding is clunky/not always handled well. Works Cited page contains consistent errors.  Writer’s voice is off key for the assignment, either too formal and rigid or too informal. | Approaching Expectations |
| D | Essays earning a D do not demonstrate success in understanding the task in the prompt. Title is a restatement of the title of the work being discussed or simple label.  Thesis does not fully answer the essay prompt; you seem to be struggling with your thoughts.  Each body paragraph’s topic sentence doesn’t clearly connect to the thesis and/or includes too much plot summary.  Concrete details are inaccurate or not connected to the topic sentence; embedding of material is clunky.  Little evidence of research is present, or it is not consistently credible, appropriate, or effectively applied.  Analysis is weak, veers off-topic, or relies too heavily on reporting information.  Flat, below grade-level vocabulary and/or inappropriate diction.  Writing is choppy and erratic with little or no sentence variety.  Writing uses few, if any, transitions.  M.L.A. citations are not correctly formatted or embedded. Works Cited page contains numerous errors or is missing.  Writer’s voice is lifeless or robotic. | Does Not Meet Expectations |
| F | Essays earning an F merely repeat the prompt or are off topic.  Assignment is incomplete, incoherent, undeveloped, or does not meet the requirements of the assignment | Off Topic/ Missing Components |