

# English 2160 Essay Grading Rubric

Your papers will be graded according to these guidelines. Read the descriptions carefully to see the range your essays fall into and what you need to work on to improve your writing.

## A:

**Content:** The paper shows a grasp of the full assignment. It clearly states and explores a complex argument or thesis with thoughtful, specific analysis. The paper is written with coherence and clarity; it develops connections among texts or the student's own ideas, and summarizes events, ideas, or sources only to advance the argument, not to provide filler.

**Structure:** The paper's structure reflects logical thinking. Paragraphs are well developed with precise use of detail and appropriate transitions. Quotations are selected to advance the argument and support the thesis, not to provide filler; they are introduced smoothly, enclosed in quotation marks, and properly cited. The paper adheres to the assignment's length requirements.

**Sophistication of Language:** The paper shows excellent control of language, appropriate use of vocabulary, and varied sentence structure.

**Mechanics:** Errors, if any, are typographical rather than an indication of problems with grammar; the paper is virtually error-free. The paper is in the required format, follows the proper system of documentation, and is handed in on time.

## B:

**Content:** The paper responds to the entire assignment, but needs more thorough development. Connections among ideas, aspects of a topic, or texts are stated and explained. The paper does not overemphasize retelling of plots or sequences of events, but describes a sequence of thoughts or events or presents brief summaries where necessary to develop and advance a thesis.

**Structure:** The paper is mostly logical and clear, but at times a transition may be missing or a connection may not be clear. Paragraphs are developed, but could use more elaboration or explanation. Appropriate quotations are introduced and discussed as support for ideas already expressed. The paper meets the length requirements.

**Sophistication of Language:** The writer expresses thoughts clearly in standard English. Vocabulary is largely appropriate to the subject matter, and sentence structure is varied in effective ways.

**Mechanics:** The paper contains very few grammatical or sentence-level errors (or patterns of error). The paper is in the required format and follows the appropriate system of documentation.

## C:

**Content:** The thesis of the paper is an acceptable response to the basic assignment, but is presented in too general and vague a manner, and more detail and clarity are needed. The paper relies mostly on brief assertions or a summary of texts without much explanation or commentary, but the assertions

make sense or the summaries are essentially clear and accurate. Connections among texts are stated, but not discussed in much detail.

**Structure:** The supporting ideas are related to the thesis but are not presented in a logical order or developed with adequate specifics. Lack of transitions and other disjunctions force the reader to infer what the writer means. Paragraphs set up ideas, but are not developed adequately. Quotations are dropped into the text without introduction or discussion, are often not the best evidence for the points they are used to support, and are too long. The paper meets the length requirements, but the writer does not really establish his or her own voice, or demonstrate real engagement with the ideas expressed. The thesis itself is self-evident rather than thoughtful or perceptive.

**Sophistication of Language:** Sentences and phrases express the thesis and supporting ideas but are repetitive in pattern. Occasional run-ons and fragments show problems with sentence boundaries. Vocabulary is usually appropriate to the subject matter, but not precise enough to express complex thoughts.

**Mechanics:** The paper follows format and documentation requirements overall, but shows grammatical or sentence level errors (or patterns of error).

**D:**

**Content:** The paper only responds to some parts of the assignment, or asserts a thesis that is so self-evident or superficial that it is hardly worthy of development. The paper makes no connections to other texts. Texts are summarized and re-told in simple terms.

**Structure:** The supporting ideas are not logically ordered, and an absence of transitions makes it more of a list than an organized essay or academic paper. Paragraphs are not developed at all. Quotations are not introduced, do not relate to the ideas they are supposed to support, and are not discussed. The writer seems to be making a point, but repeats one or two ideas without elaborating or moving on. The paper may not meet the length requirements.

**Sophistication of Language:** Sentences and phrases are often unclear and may prevent the expression of coherent ideas, making the paper illogical at times. Vocabulary is limited, often inappropriate to the subject, and inadequate for expression of complex ideas.

**Mechanics:** The many grammatical or sentence-level errors (or patterns of error) interfere with clarity and coherence. Format or citation requirements are ignored.

**F:**

**Content:** The paper does not fulfill the assignment, but rather for the most part ignores directions, or responds only to a part of the assignment, without showing much thought or detail on even that part.

**Structure:** The paper is a list of limited ideas in no logical order. Sometimes one or two ideas will result in paragraphs, but they are not developed. Quotations are missing or do not support the ideas, and are not introduced or discussed. The essay does not meet the length requirements, or does so only by padding.

**Sophistication of Language:** Sentences and phrases are generally illogical or simple and repetitive, and the thinking is difficult to follow. Vocabulary is simple or inappropriate, and ideas are not explored.

**Mechanics:** There are many grammatical and sentence-level errors (or patterns of error) that impede understanding. Format and citation requirements are ignored. Key words, phrases, or sentences from the reading or from other sources are copied without quotation marks or are plagiarized outright from other sources. Plagiarism may have additional consequences as well as the failure of the paper in which it occurs. See the Intellectual Integrity Policy for details.