

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	UNSATISFACTORY	UNACCEPTABLE
ARGUMENT	Essay contains a clear argument. Author is in control of where essay is headed and shows awareness of audience. Author recalibrates argument throughout essay.	Argument is present, but often implied rather than explicit. Reasoning for the argument's organization occasionally unclear. Author demonstrates a vague sense of audience.	Author attempts to make an argument, but is unsuccessful. Or, argument fails to build on itself or recalibrate when necessary. No sense of who audience is.	No attempt is made to articulate an argument.
ANALYSIS	Author addresses main question or issue, and adds new insight to the subject not provided in readings or class discussions. The author synthesizes knowledge in new ways and relates to material not covered in the course.	Author competently addresses main question or issue, but does not add much new insight into the subject. That said, it is clear that the author has absorbed material and is able to communicate this knowledge to others.	Author attempts to address main question or issue, but fails. The author has made some use of material from the course, but does not fully understand its meaning or context and cannot clearly convey it to others.	Essay does not address the question.
EVIDENCE AND EXAMPLES	Provides compelling and surprising evidence and examples. The significance of the evidence is clear. There are no gaps in reasoning—i.e., the reader does not need to assume anything or do additional research to accept main argument. The essay addresses multiple interpretations of ambiguous evidence.	Provides necessary evidence to convince reader of most aspects of the main argument. The significance of some evidence may not be clear. Reader must make a few mental leaps or have outside knowledge to fully accept all aspects of main argument. Alternative interpretations of evidence are mentioned but not fully considered.	Not enough evidence is provided to support author's argument, or evidence is incomplete, incorrect, or oversimplified. Alternative interpretations of ambiguous evidence are ignored.	Either no evidence is provided, or there are numerous factual mistakes, omissions or oversimplification. There is little or no mention of insights from discussions and readings.
RHETORIC AND STYLE	Essay hums with vibrant examples and figurative language. Multiple senses are evoked. The language is crisp and author's tone sure and deliberate.	Author occasionally uses figurative language. A few senses are occasionally evoked. The tone is difficult to pin down or inconsistent.	The essay lacks personality. The reader is left sensory deprived. The essay is toneless.	The essay is a chore to read, unpleasant and boring.
MECHANICS	Readable and well-written, with no grammatical, spelling or semantic errors.	A few errors or clunky sentences.	Errors and clunky sentences interfere with the argument, requiring much patience and generosity on the part of the reader.	Nearly impossible to read.