

Evaluation Criteria for Written Work

The following general evaluation criteria apply to written assignments in an academic setting. The criteria represent general standard guidelines for evaluating written assignments.

PLEASE NOTE: These standards only represent general criteria and do not mean essays will automatically earn a certain grade. However, for any piece of writing to earn a particular grade, the criteria listed represents a baseline that must be met.

The assignment may earn an A if it:

- Deals with the assigned topic.
- Is written completely in standard English. It contains no significant errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage that obscure meaning or distract the reader.
- Adheres completely to those conventions of academic prose stated by the instructor.
- Includes an introduction that moves readers smoothly from an engaging opener through a presentation of the subject of the assignment and into a clear, specific thesis or objective statement. That statement must offer some original and thoughtful insight about the work under discussion.
- Thoroughly develops the thesis or objective with well-reasoned arguments supported by specific, concrete, and appropriate details. In all cases, the relevance of supporting details to the thesis must be explicit.
- Is organized in a pattern appropriate to the thesis or objective. The organization must, in all cases, be clear, logical, and apparent.
- Brings the reader "full circle" in the conclusion. That is, the conclusion reminds readers of some pertinent and striking motif which was established in the introduction.
- Is produced in the manuscript form and requirements specified by the instructor.

The assignment may earn a B if it:

- Deals with the assigned topic.
- Is written primarily in standard English. It must contain only a limited number of errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage that obscure meaning or distract the reader.
- Exhibits an attempt to adhere to those academic prose conventions stated by the instructor.
- Includes an introduction that gets readers' attention and clearly states the thesis or objective. The statement must offer some original insight about the work under discussion.
- Supports the thesis or objective with well-reasoned arguments supported by specific, concrete, and appropriate details.
- Is effectively organized in a pattern appropriate to the thesis or objective.
- Offers a conclusion that leaves the reader with a feeling of completeness.
- Is produced in the manuscript form and requirements specified by the instructor.

The assignment may earn a C if it:

- Is written primarily in standard English. It may contain some errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage; but these errors should never totally obscure the writer's meaning or dominate the reader's perception of the assignment.
- Includes an introduction that clearly states the thesis or objective.
- Develops the thesis or objective with at least some relevant details.
- Is organized in a pattern that is, for the most part, clear to the reader and appropriate to the thesis or objective.
- Ends with a conclusion that reminds the reader of the purpose and the details used to develop it.
- Is produced in the manuscript form and requirements specified by the instructor.

The assignment may earn a D if it:

- Is written in standard English to a degree that the writer's meaning is generally discernible. Errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage are present but do not dominate the assignment.
- Includes an introduction, thesis or objective, paragraph divisions, and conclusion.
- Supports the thesis with at least some details
- Exhibits some attempt at organization.
- Is produced primarily in the manuscript form specified by the instructor.

The assignment will earn an F, if it does not meet the minimum criteria for a D. The following errors are the most common.

- It does not deal with the assigned topic.
- It is dominated by errors in spelling, punctuation, grammar, or usage that obscure meaning or which would distract an average reader.
- It has no controlling thesis or objective.
- It does not develop one central idea or theme throughout the work.
- Supporting detail is weak or non-existent.
- There seems to have been little or no attempt at organization.
- It lacks basic parts (introduction, body paragraphs, or conclusion)