

| | 4 High Proficiency | 3 Proficient | 2 Low Proficiency | 1 No Proficiency |
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| 1 Thesis | A developed, workable thesis that establishes a clear motive for writing. Thesis is clearly framed as an argument. | Reflects some components of a thesis (subject, position, hint at organization) but needs fuller development. | Thesis is poorly defined and/or inconsistent. Thesis verges on not being framed as an argument. | Essay lacks a thesis, or thesis fails to accurately convey what the paper develops. Thesis rendered as a statement of fact. |
| 2 Rhetorical Sensitivity & Multiple Perspectives | Clearly attentive to the values and beliefs of the intended audience; articulates a clear perspective; is fluently able to approach position from a different perspective and anticipate and diffuse counterarguments. | Contains diction and examples likely to appeal to a specific audience and represent a clear perspective; shows an awareness of different perspectives and counterarguments but does not always fully address them. | Shows some awareness of an audience and a single perspective but fails to answer questions or rebuttals an alternate perspective might propose. | Shows only occasional connections with a targeted perspective; does not have a specific perspective in mind and fails to seriously consider possible counterarguments and/or points of view. |
| 3 Sentence and Paragraph Development & Transition | Develops one main idea per paragraph; contains strong topic sentences. Moves smoothly between points on paragraph and sentence levels. | Contains clear topic sentences and transitions, but may not be thoroughly worked out. Writing is coherent. | One main idea per paragraph and some transitions that may be inconsistent and/or awkward, but writing is still coherent. | Uneven transitions and unity; sentences are difficult to follow. Writing is frequently incoherent. No effort at transitions, and/or no variety in sentence patterns. |
| 4 Incorporation of Sources | At least three sources are used appropriately and documented properly; quotations and paraphrases flow evenly and are clearly relevant in support of a point or argument. Flawless paraphrasing, | At least three sources are used appropriately and documented properly; flow of quotations and paraphrases may not always be perfect. Relevance of quotations may not always be clear. Paraphrasing largely correct and efficient. | Fewer than three sources used. Usage appears improper and/or sources are improperly documented. Stilted flow between quotations and paraphrases. Relevance to argument not always clear. Paraphrasing may appear inefficient or incorrect at times. | Very little evidence of quotation, paraphrasing, or summary. Sources are used improperly or not at all. Sources are not cited or are cited improperly. Little or no relevance to argument. Incorrect paraphrasing. |
| 5 Critical Thinking: Identifies and Explains Issues | Skillfully identifies and summarizes main issues, successfully articulates a main argument about those issues, and identifies explicit issues and their connections to each other. | Clearly identifies and summarizes main issues, and successfully identifies explicit issues and demonstrates their connections to each other. | Identifies main issue but does not summarize or articulate them clearly or completely. | Fails to identify, summarize, or explain the main issue, and/or represents the main issue inaccurately. |
| 6 | Clearly and accurately identifies | Clearly and accurately identifies | Accurately identifies some but | Misidentifies or fails to identify |

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| Critical Thinking: Distinguishes Claims | all factual, conceptual, and value claims and proposed solutions. Identifies claims implicit in the assumptions and implications of any arguments taken in to account. | most factual, conceptual, and value claims and proposed solutions. | not all factual, conceptual, and value claims and proposed solutions, though some of these may not be entirely clear on first reading. | any factual, conceptual, and value claims and proposed solutions. |
| 7 Critical Thinking: Application | Draws out at least three valid implications from three sources. Recognizes at least two attendant premises and conclusions and constructs a logical argument that demonstrates exemplary inductive and deductive reasoning abilities. | Draws out at least two valid implications from three sources. Recognizes at least one attendant premise and conclusion. Constructs a logical argument that demonstrates satisfactory reasoning abilities. | Draws out only one implication from three or fewer sources, or three implications of questionable or uneven validity. Does not clearly recognize the premise or conclusion of the sources surveyed. Constructs an argument where the reasoning abilities are weak or flawed. | Any implications drawn out are clearly invalid. Fails to recognize the premise or conclusion of sources surveyed. Fails to construct an argument. |
| 8 Sentences | Skillful sentence construction; unified, coherent, forceful, effectively varied, and grammatically flawless. Syntax reflects deftness in coordinating, subordinating, and emphasizing ideas. No errors in syntax and grammar. | Adequate sentence construction; mostly unified, coherent, forceful, and varied. Syntax reflects capable coordination, subordination, and emphasis of ideas. Few syntactical and/or grammatical errors but none which hamper comprehension. | Weak sentence construction that only occasionally demonstrates unity, coherence, forcefulness, and variety. Limited coordination, subordination, and emphasis of ideas; syntax is often awkward, fused, garbled, or incomplete. Errors in syntax and grammar hamper comprehension. | Poor sentence construction that does not demonstrate unity, coherence, forcefulness, or variety. Syntax is monotonous and overly-simple. No coordination or emphasis of ideas; syntax and grammar are frequently marred enough to frustrate reading comprehension. |
| 9 Mechanics | Flawless and consistent use of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. | A few errors in standard punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling, but none which occasion confusion. | Errors in standard punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling that create some confusion. | Frequent errors in standard punctuation, capitalization, and spelling frustrate comprehension. |

Holistic Score: 4 3 2 1