

	DISTINGUISHED	PROFICIENT	NOVICE	BEGINNER	INEXPERIENCED
THESIS & TOPIC	Topic is original and adds to class discussion in some way. Thesis is specific, clear, concise, and engages in sophisticated analysis (i.e. the “how” and “why”).	Topic may have been addressed in class, though the thesis may add something new. Thesis is specific and clear, though may not fully address the “how” and/or “why” of analysis.	Topic is unoriginal and may be too broad. Thesis may not be clear or specific and does not address the “how” and “why.”	Topic is inappropriate for a paper of this kind (i.e. too broad, does not address text). Thesis is unclear and unfinished.	Topic is unclear. Thesis is nonexistent.
ORGANIZATION	Organization is thoughtful and balanced. Ideas are separated into topic-centered paragraphs, each with its own topic sentence. Transitional phrases aid in flow and readability.	Organization may be unbalanced, but does incorporate topic-centered paragraphs and transitional phrases, though topic sentences may be unclear (but are present).	Organization is unbalanced and/or paragraphs may not appropriately reflect sub-topics. Topic sentences may be absent, and writing may lack transitional phrases (i.e. writing seems choppy).	Organization is unclear and may be confusing. Does not appropriately reflect sub-topics. Topic sentences are absent, and writing may lack transitional phrases.	Organization is confusing. Writing seems to lack structure of any kind. Writing is choppy.
WRITTEN EXPRESSION	Sentences structure is clear (not convoluted) and tone is professional and academic in nature. Does not use first- or second-person pronouns.	Sentence structure is clear (not convoluted) and tone is professional and academic in all areas, but may incorporate first- or second-person pronouns occasionally.	Sentence structure is convoluted in some areas. Tone may not be professional in all areas. May frequently incorporate inappropriate pronouns.	In general, sentence structure is convoluted (but still readable). In general, tone is inappropriate.	Sentence structures are confusing and unreadable. Tone is inappropriate throughout.
USAGE & MECHANICS	Few, if any, grammatical and/or punctuation errors. Few, if any, typos, spelling errors, or wrong words.	Occasional grammatical and/or punctuation errors. Few, if any, typos, spelling errors, and wrong words.	Occasional grammatical and/or punctuation errors. Frequent typos, spelling errors, and wrong words.	Frequent errors throughout, though writing is still readable.	Errors make writing unreadable.
EVIDENCE	Claims are fully supported with evidence from the text. Quotations are appropriate in length and fully integrated into sentences. Flawless MLA citations.	Claims are fully supported with evidence from the text, though quotations may not be fully integrated. Occasional MLA citation errors.	Claims may not be fully supported with evidence from the text, and may contain stand-alone quotes or inappropriate quotes in some areas. May contain frequent MLA citation errors.	Claims are not supported with evidence. Quotes are inappropriate and/or stand-alone. Frequent MLA citation errors.	Quotes are absent. Citations are absent.