

## Know Your Grade: Standard Essay Rubric

This class is graded on a 0-100 scale, with plus/minus grades. Although we are often reading “fun” works, I expect your assignments to be seriously written and considered, and I grade them rigorously.

Your grade reflects my experienced judgment of the quality of the essay as a whole – its content, style, and mechanics – and is scored using these guidelines:

**A+/A** These essays offer a persuasive analysis of the work. The writer makes a strong case for his or her interpretation and engages the text through apt and specific references. Although these essays may not be error-free, their perceptive analysis is apparent in writing that is clear and effectively organized. Essays scored an A+ display more sophisticated analysis and more effective control of language than do essays scored an A.

**A-/B+** These essays offer a reasonable analysis of the work. The writer provides a sustained, competent reading and addresses the requirements of the prompt. Although these essays may not be error-free and are less perceptive or less convincing than A+/A work, the writer presents his or her ideas with clarity and control and refers to the text for support. Essays scored an A- present more convincing analysis and more consistent command of language than do essays scored a B+.

**B** These essays respond to the prompt with a plausible reading of the work, but tend to be superficial or thin in their discussion. While containing some analysis, implicit or explicit, the argument may be slight, and support from the text may tend toward summary or paraphrase. While the writer demonstrated adequate control of language, the essay may be marred by surface errors. These essays are not as well conceived, organized, or developed as A-/B+ essays.

**C** These lower-half essays fail to offer an adequate analysis of the work. The analysis may be partial, unconvincing, or irrelevant; the writer may ignore the use of literary elements to focus instead on his or her personal response. These essays may be characterized by an unfocused or repetitive presentation of ideas, an absence of textual support, a dependence on cliché, or an accumulation of errors. Essays scored C- may contain significant misreading and/or demonstrate inept writing.

**D** These essays compound the weaknesses of C papers. They may persistently misread the work, or be unacceptably brief. They may contain pervasive errors that interfere with understanding. Although the writer makes some attempt to respond to the prompt, his or her ideas are presented with little clarity, organization, or support from the text.

**F** Essays scored an F contain little or no coherent discussion of the text and/or fail to adequately fulfill the requirements of the prompt. They may reveal that the writer has not actually read the text.

The score for an exceptionally well-written essay may be raised slightly above the otherwise appropriate score. In no case will a poorly written essay score higher than a C.