

## Grading Standards

*NOTE ON USE: These are holistic characterizations – Not all elements must be present to justify a grade; conversely, one or two elements in another grade category may not be sufficient to justify that grade.*

**A work is defined as Excellent ("of the highest or finest quality; exceptionally good of its kind" -- *American Heritage College Dictionary*)**

--ideas are mature, perceptive, original; they contribute something substantial and unique to a discussion of the topic and reflect a thorough understanding of the subject under discussion

--there is a clearly expressed, readily identifiable central focus or thesis

--this idea is logically developed

--support for the thesis is provided by ample, appropriate and effective evidence, including detailed facts, examples, and/or other specific data--all of which is clearly linked to the thesis with a thorough explanation of the significance of the evidence

--supporting evidence is organized into well-developed, coherent paragraphs

--paragraphs will normally contain an introductory topic sentence, followed by more detailed sentences providing the specific evidence

--paragraphs and sentences will have logical and sophisticated transitions

--sentences are complete, fluent, and reflect a variety of structures

--word choice is precise, distinctive, and free of clichés

--errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and usage are minor or absent.

--format and topic meet or exceed assignment guidelines.

**B work is defined as Good ("competent;" "of high quality" -- *American Heritage College Dictionary*)**

A B paper is very similar to an A paper. It generally does not have the depth and sophistication of an A paper; however, the grammar and mechanics are expected to be very good.

--ideas are somewhat mature and perceptive

--there is a clear central focus or thesis idea

--logic is evident in the development

--support for the thesis varies from excellent to good.

--paragraphs contain some specific evidence, though supporting analysis may not be as thorough as that of an A essay

--transitions are adequate, but not as elegant as those in an A essay

--sentences are complete and clear, varied in structure and mostly free of errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling

--word choice is competent, free of clichés

--format and topic meet assignment instructions.

**C work is defined as Average-"competent, but undistinguished" -- *American Heritage College Dictionary*)**

A C essay meets minimum requirements for the assignment--length, topics addressed--but does so in a minimal way. Such an essay may not have all of the problems below, but one or more will be apparent, and while one such problem may not necessarily result in a C grade, it might if the problem is the overwhelming in its effect on the paper.

--ideas are routine, predictable, and obvious

--thesis is adequate

--logic is still evident, but weak

--support is minimal, with a few details and/or some obvious generalizations

--paragraphs are meager, minimally developed

--transitions are mechanical---e.g. "first," "second..." --or missing altogether

--sentences are complete, but occasionally awkward

--vocabulary is dull, with occasional clichés, slang, or unclear expressions

--errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation are evident, and some are basic.

--format and topic minimally meet assignment guidelines.

**D work is defined as Poor ("not adequate;" "inferior;" "lacking in value;" "lacking in content" -- *American Heritage College Dictionary*)**

--ideas reveal limited insight

--central focus or thesis is vague, superficial

--logic is weak or vague

--supporting details are few; generalizations are many

--paragraphs are undeveloped, often incoherent

--sentences are unclear and often require rereading

--vocabulary is imprecise

--errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation are frequent and major

--format and topic may not meet assignment guidelines.

**F work is defined as Unacceptable**

--ideas are shallow and vague

--thesis is inadequate or simplistic

--development is random and illogical

--support is minimal, unclear, general

--paragraphs lack clear main point; they ramble

--sentences are unclear, poorly constructed, and sometimes nonsensical

--format and topic does not meet assignment guidelines.