

## UNDERGRADUATE GRADING CRITERIA

### A + (90 and up)

- 1) Forceful development of a distinctive and fresh thesis
- 2) Exceptional depth of insight, while offering a clear, compelling argument
- 3) Careful attention to subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language—evidence of intellectual risk-taking
- 4) Paragraph breaks reflect meaningful and effective shifts in topic and argumentation
- 5) Persuasive, thought-provoking, persistent use of textual evidence to support one's argument
- 6) Close engagement with primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; carefully distinguishes the author's argument from those of sources. Quotations seamlessly integrated into text, with proper documentation
- 7) Sentence structure/grammar correct, with a deft use of style, rhetorically impressive and few, if any, errors

### A (85 to 89)

- 1) Clear development of a specific and challenging thesis
- 2) Depth of insight, while offering a clear, focused argument
- 3) Ability not only to explore a subject, but also to see around it—subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language, ability to anticipate possible objections or criticisms, etc. Some intellectual risk-taking.
- 4) Paragraph breaks reflect meaningful and effective shifts in topic and argumentation
- 5) Persuasive, persistent use of textual evidence to support one's argument
- 6) Close engagement with primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; carefully distinguishes the author's argument from those of sources. Quotations seamlessly integrated into text, with proper documentation
- 7) Sentence structure/grammar correct, with a deft use of style, rhetorically impressive and few, if any, errors

### A- (80 to 84)

- 1) Clear development of a specific and interesting thesis
- 2) Insightful, while offering a clear, focused argument
- 3) Ability not only to explore a subject, but also to see around it—subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language, ability to anticipate possible objections or criticisms, etc.
- 4) Paragraph breaks reflect meaningful and effective shifts in topic and argumentation
- 5) Persuasive use of textual evidence to support one's argument
- 6) Close, engaged reference to primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; carefully distinguishes the author's argument from those of sources. Quotations seamlessly integrated into text, with proper documentation
- 7) Sentence structure/grammar largely correct, with a strong sense of style, rhetorically impressive, with few errors

### B+ (75 to 79)

- 1) Clear development of a specific thesis
- 2) Offers a clear, focused argument
- 3) Evidence of ability to explore a subject, with some ability to recognize subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language
- 4) Paragraph breaks reflect meaningful shifts in topic and argumentation

- 5) Persuasive use of textual evidence to support one's argument
- 6) Close reference to primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; largely distinguishes the author's argument from those of sources. Quotations integrated into text, with proper documentation
- 7) Sentence structure/grammar correct, with some sense of style, rhetorically interesting, but with some errors

#### **B (70 to 74)**

- 1) Clear development of a specific thesis
- 2) Offers a focused argument
- 3) Some evidence of ability to explore a subject, displays only occasionally the ability to recognize subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language
- 4) Paragraph breaks reflect meaningful shifts in topic and argumentation
- 5) Persistent use of textual evidence to support one's argument
- 6) References to primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; largely distinguishes the author's argument from those of sources. Quotations integrated into text, with proper documentation
- 7) Sentence structure/grammar largely correct, with some sense of style, but with some errors

#### **C + (65 to 69)**

- 1) Reasonably clear development of a thesis
- 2) Offers a relatively focused argument
- 3) Little evidence of ability to explore a subject in depth, occasionally fails to recognize subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language
- 4) Some problems with paragraphing (paragraphs may be too long or too short; breaks may not be clearly meaningful)
- 5) Some use of textual evidence to support one's argument
- 6) Occasional references to primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; exhibits some difficulty distinguishing the author's argument from those of sources. Quotations awkwardly integrated into text, but with reasonable effort at documentation
- 7) Sentence structure/grammar somewhat correct, but has several errors--evident misunderstanding of some point of elementary grammar/spelling (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, awkwardly integrated quotations)

#### **C (60-64)**

- 1) Evidence of an attempt at a thesis
- 2) Offers a somewhat focused argument; basic ability to expound ideas
- 3) Little evidence of ability to explore a subject in depth, often fails to recognize subtleties and ambiguities of ideas and language
- 4) Some problems with paragraphing (paragraphs may be too long or too short; breaks may not be clearly meaningful)
- 5) Some use of textual evidence to support one's argument
- 6) Few references to primary and, where appropriate, secondary texts; exhibits difficulty distinguishing the author's argument from those of sources. Quotations, when they occur, awkwardly integrated into text, but with some effort at documentation
- 7) Sentence structure/grammar somewhat correct, but has several errors--evident misunderstanding of several points of elementary grammar/spelling (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)

**D+ (55 to 59)**

Inadequacy at several of the following levels:

- 1) No thesis, but instead simply restates the essay topic
- 2) Argument has little focus or logical coherence
- 3) Difficulty with handling or understanding ideas or the ambiguities of language
- 4) Significant problems with paragraphing (few or no paragraph breaks; paragraph breaks not connected to shifts in topic or meaning)
- 5) Virtually no use of textual evidence to support one's argument. Quotations are often misattributed or irrelevant to the point being made, with little effort at documentation
- 6) Overgeneralization with inadequate support, or with examples that run to lengthy, irrelevant paraphrase or plot summary
- 7) Errors of grammar or diction frequent enough to interfere with understanding. Persistent misunderstanding of several points of elementary grammar/spelling (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)

**D (50 to 54)**

Inadequacy at several of the following levels:

- 1) No thesis, but instead simply restates the essay topic, or fails to state what the essay topic is
- 2) Argument has little logical coherence
- 3) Great difficulty with handling or understanding ideas or the ambiguities of language
- 4) Significant problems with paragraphing (few or no paragraph breaks; paragraph breaks not connected to shifts in topic or meaning)
- 5) Very little use of textual evidence to support one's argument. Quotations from primary and secondary texts are rare, often irrelevant to the point being made, with little effort at documentation
- 6) Overgeneralization with inadequate support, or with examples that run to lengthy, irrelevant paraphrase or plot summary
- 7) Errors of grammar or diction often interfere with understanding. Persistent misunderstanding of several points of elementary grammar/spelling (comma splices, fragments, semicolon errors, subject-verb disagreements, poorly integrated quotations)

**F (49 and down)**

- Inadequacy on *many* levels at once (**See D above**)
- Ideas, language use too simple for level of course
- Content largely "borrowed" from sources with no individual distillation, but no apparent attempt to deceive

**0 (Report to Undergraduate Chair)**

- Plagiarism  
(See Department's Plagiarism Prevention and Procedures  
<http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergrad/plagprevent.html>)

**Note: This grading criteria is for information purposes only and cannot be used as the basis of appeal.**