

**Basic Mechanics**

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Extremely few mechanical problems (spelling/grammar/usage). Correct formatting. Assignment followed to the letter.

A few typos and mechanical issues. Essay would benefit from a careful proofread. Minor problems following the assignment.

Many grammar/spelling mistakes. Essay apparently written quickly and/or poorly proof-read. Problems following assignment.

**Quality of Writing**

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Prose was simple, concise, and easy to read. Claims were clear. Essay has a discernible but unobtrusive "voice".

Generally well-written and readable. Some wordiness, awkward constructions, and/or unclarity.

Difficult to read. Overly complex and awkward prose. Many sentences unclear or ambiguous.

**Structure**

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Appropriately introduces and contextualizes topic for audience. Essay's structure clearly explained. Coherent paragraphs. Good signposting and clear transitions.

Some stage-setting and introduction. Essay's structure takes some work to grasp (or only becomes clear later). Clear thought given to transitions and internal coherence of paragraphs.

Difficult to grasp essay's structure. Little or inappropriate introduction. Little or ineffective signposting. Major problems with transitions.

**Accuracy, Understanding, and Insight**

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Essay evinces an accurate understanding of relevant concepts, issues, contexts, positions, and arguments. Shows appropriate sensitivity to background dialectic. Interesting insights offered.

No major problems with understanding. Some minor inaccuracies. Glimmer of an interesting insight.

Serious and/or persistent misunderstandings disrupt essay's main point.

**Thesis**

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

A clear, focused, substantive, and interesting thesis with an appropriate scope was articulated reasonably early. Thesis was the major focus on the essay.

Clear attempt at articulating a thesis, though with some minor problems (scope, vagueness, unclarity, weaseling, &c.) Essay occasionally lost focus on thesis.

Lack of substantive thesis or major problems with its articulation (unclear, inappropriate scope, not expressed early, not the clear focus of the essay).

**Argument**

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Thesis was well-supported by detailed and patient argument. Argument's structure (assumptions, premises, reasoning, sub-arguments) was clear. Potential objections helpfully discussed.

Clear attempt to support thesis with argument, though with some problematic shortcomings (unclear, fallacious, lack of detail). Objections considered but handled too quickly.

Either little to no argument offered or major problems with the argument (e.g., highly unclear, mere opinions or pointed questions playing its role, little sensitivity to potential objections).

**Evidence**

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Potentially controversial claims properly and judiciously sourced. Quotations were incorporated gracefully into the text and properly introduced, analyzed, and cited. Correctly formatted citations/references.

More or better evidence needed in spots. Some potentially controversial claims appeared to be merely expressions of opinion. Some minor issues with use/selection of quotes/citations/references.

Little attention to relevant texts. Inappropriate sources (e.g., non peer-reviewed), missing/unspecific citations. Major claims offered without sufficient evidence.