General Rubric for a College Paper -- Dennis G. Jerz, Seton Hill University jerz.setonhill.edu (brief explanations) Jan 2010

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criterion** | **A** | **B+** | **B-** | **C** | **D** | **F** |
| **Depth/Ideas**ResponseStanceThesisKnowledgeOpinion | Ambitious and engaging. Clear and defensible. Insightful, worthwhile and nuanced.Deep, broad, & integral to thesis.Informed; synthesizes alternatives. | Substantial and effective.Clear and defensible.Creative, appropriately complex.Appropriately applied to thesis.Considered; acknowledges alternatives.  | Appropriate and mostly effective.Clear and generally defensible.Useful; appropriately complex.Generally applied well to thesis. Unhasty; acknowledges alternatives. | Acceptable and productive.Mostly clear; generally defensible.Productive and useful.Usefully connected to the thesis.Parts may seem simplistic or one-sided. | Off-topic, sketchy, or inappropriate.May be unclear, shaky, or obscure.May be obvious, extreme, or unclear.Sporadically or ineffectively applied.Dismisses/ignores valid alternatives. | Unacceptable. Unacceptable. Unacceptable. Unacceptable. Unacceptable. |
| **Support/Engagement**EvidenceExamplesSubstanceSources (if needed)Int. Engagement | Apt, critically and effectively applied.Insightful, with effective explanationsBrief, weighty, intellectually satisfying.Well-chosen; cited accurately & briefly.Adept; fully & deeply engaged.  | Effective, appropriate, creatively applied. Clear, varied, effective.Significant, avoiding filler.Good sources; cited accurately & brieflySkillful; wholly engaged. | Productive, useful, helpfully applied.Clear and effective in several ways.Generally significant, avoiding filler.Good sources, cited accurately.Appropriate; well engaged. | Acceptable; generally applied usefully.Generally clear and helpful; possibly sparse.Good content; perhaps some filler.Cited reasonably well; sources may be iffy.Some solid engagement evident.  | Spotty use of evidence.May be unclear or ineffective.Diluted by summary or rambling.May be weak, but cited reasonably.Engagement is weak or spotty. | Unacceptable. Unacceptable. Unacceptable. Unacceptable. Unacceptable. |
| **Coherence/Organization**BlueprintParagraphsTransitionsUnified PathTitle/Thes./Concl. | Defining, logical & complex.Well-crafted steps along “the path.”Logical, smooth, engaging flow.Clear, inviting, insightful, ambitious.Harmonious and cumulative. | Clear, logical & complex. Topics clearly relate to main thesis.Effective, varied signposts to “the path.”Effectively conveys upper-level ideas.Corresponding and integrated. | Mostly clear and logical; sufficiently detailed.Appropriately focused on the main topic.Help the reader connect ideas fairly easily.With a bit of effort, reader can follow.Connected fairly well.  | Usefully identifies supporting points.Generally focused on the main topic.Helpful, but possibly weak or mechanical.The reader must work to identify it.May not fully agree. | Unclear organizing principle.Off-topic intros, digressions, or filler.Weak or missing. Weak or missing.Relationship is unclear. | Unacceptable. Unacceptable. Unacceptable. Unacceptable. Unacceptable |
| **Style/Expression**DictionSyntaxFocusTone | Careful selection of powerful words.Polished, elegant sentences & phrases.Sophisticated handling of reader’s needs,Extremely well-suited to the occasion.  | Accurate, varied, effective word choices.Varied, effective sentences and phrases.Successful treatment of reader’s needs.Suited to the occasion. | Generally effective word choices.Generally effective and accurate.Generally handles the reader’s needs.Generally appropriate for the occasion. | Minor word-level errors, but generally sound.Minor phrase- and sentence-level issues.Generally acknowledges reader’s needs.Some evidence of the proper tone. | Problems hurt reader comprehension.Problems hurt reader comprehensionReader’s needs may be peripheral.May be inappropriate or inconsistent. | Unacceptable. Unacceptable. Unacceptable. Unacceptable.  |
| **Mechanics/Completeness**PunctuationWords & PhrasesSentencesGeneral Format | Few if any errors in punctuation, words, phrases, sentences, and general format. | A few trivial errors in punctuation, words, phrases, sentences or general format, without affecting the presentation. | Some minor errors in punctuation, words, phrases, sentences or general format, without seriously affecting the presentation. | May contain moderate errors in punctuation, words, phrases, sentences or general format, that affect the presentation. | Significant mechanical errors or omissions impact the submission's ability to meet important assignment goals.  | Unacceptable. |