

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING AN ESSAY ON LITERATURE

SCC Department of English and Humanities

EXPRESSION AND COMMUNICATION OF IDEAS

Introduction (10 points)

- Focus the reader's attention on the subject of the essay in a thorough paragraph of thought-provoking sentences leading effectively into the thesis statement. You may use the introduction to either identify the piece of literature and its plot or theme or begin discussing an idea in the literature and then identify the piece of literature in the body of your paper. In either case, your thesis should clearly state your point of view about the literature, and then the remainder of the essay will support that thesis.
- If the thesis is not stated, as in a narrative or argument that implies the main idea or builds to the main point in the conclusion, provide background or use other devices to stimulate interest in your subject and provide a direction for your essay.

Thesis (10 points)

- **Option 1:** Clearly, specifically, and interestingly state or imply the main idea which the essay will explain or support.
- **Option 2:** If appropriate, build to the main point stated or clearly implied in the conclusion.

Development (40 points)

- Thoroughly support or explain the thesis or build to a logical conclusion in a series of vivid, interesting paragraphs, fully developed with reasons for your point of view and examples from the literature to explain your interpretation.
- Do not write a narrative that retells the entire story or poem, but you may need to give a synopsis of events to clarify a point for your reader.
- If you are supporting your interpretation with ideas borrowed from outside sources, be sure that you paraphrase and quote using MLA documentation rules. Failure to do so will result in "0."

Expression (10 points): Use precise language, varied sentence beginnings, and varied sentence patterns to express ideas.

Unity (10 points): Make each sentence in a paragraph adhere to the main idea of the paragraph; make each paragraph adhere to the main idea of the essay.

Organization and Coherence (10 points): Arrange ideas in a logical order; use transitions and other cohesive devices to link ideas effectively within and between paragraphs. Be sure to refer clearly to paraphrases or quotations from the literature.

Conclusion (10 points): Logically complete the development of the thesis or build to the main point of the essay.

Creativity: Up to 5 extra points may be awarded for creative expression.

EFFECTIVELY WRITTEN SENTENCES (1 point deducted per error)

Sentence Structure: Avoid errors in subordination, coordination, and parallelism. Avoid sentence fragments, comma splices, and fused, incomplete, or awkward sentences.

Grammar and Usage: Avoid inappropriate verb or pronoun use, subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent disagreement, unclear pronoun reference, misplaced or dangling modifier, inappropriate shift in person or tense, redundancy, imprecise language, or incorrect usage.

Spelling and Capitalization: Avoid errors in spelling and capitalization.

Punctuation: Avoid misuse or omission of the apostrophe, brackets, colon, comma, dash, ellipsis, exclamation point, hyphen, parentheses, period, question mark, quotation marks, semi-colon, slash, underlining, or italics.

ESSAY GRADE: A=100-93; B=92-85; C=84-77; D=76-70; F=69-0