

Grading rubric for analytic paper

A paper The paper offers an interesting, even surprising, interpretative claim that would not be self-evident to most people. The claim is clearly expressed at the beginning or end and is supported by specific, well-chosen evidence whose connection to the claim is plausible and clearly explained. The content of the A paper is delivered in such a way as to make the reader feel she's been taught something significant, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph. The A paper plays fair, considering counterarguments, other points of view or possibilities. The title and opening paragraph are engaging; the transitions are elegant; the phrasing is tight, fresh, and highly specific; the sentence structure is varied; and the tone enhances the purposes of the paper. The introduction compels the reader to keep reading and the conclusion doesn't merely repeat the interpretative claim: it answers the "so what?" question, explaining convincingly why the analysis matters. The title is both appropriate and interesting. The A paper, because of its intelligent approach to the assignment, careful organization, and development, imparts a feeling of unusual clarity and intellectual stimulation.

B paper The B paper is significantly more than competent. Its interpretative claim is interesting and clearly expressed at the beginning or end and is supported by specific, well-chosen evidence whose connection to the claim is plausible and clearly explained. The paper imparts substantial information and acknowledges other points of view. Its points are logically ordered, well developed, and unified around a clear organizing principle that's apparent early in the paper. The opening paragraph draws the reader in; the conclusion explains why the paper matters; transitions between paragraphs are for the most part smooth; and the sentence structures are pleasingly varied. The title is appropriate. The diction of the B paper is typically much more concise and precise than that of the C paper. It usually has some grammar or usage errors, but nothing too distracting. In places, the B paper can be quite distinctive or memorable.

C paper The C paper is competent. It generally meets the assignment, but at points it feels more like a summary than an analysis. Its interpretative claim often seems obvious or conventional and the evidence it offers feels scanty or not clearly connected with that claim. It is reasonably well organized and developed, though ideas are typically cast in the form of generalities. Stylistically, the C paper often has an introduction that does little to hook the reader; transitions between paragraphs that are a bit bumpy; sentences that tend to follow a predictable subject-verb-object pattern; diction that may be repetitive, redundant, or imprecise; a generic title; and a conclusion that rehashes the paper. The C paper gets the job done, but needs more intellectual rigor and imagination.

D paper While the D paper does attempt to address the assignment, its interpretative claim is often vague or difficult to identify. The paper tends to summarize rather than analyze the exhibit. It offers little evidence, relying instead on generalizations. Because an organizing principle is hard to detect, the reader often feels lost. There may be little attempt to introduce or conclude the paper. The paper may be substantially shorter than called for. Sentences are often awkward, ambiguous, and fraught with errors of grammar and usage. The whole piece gives the impression of having been written a few hours before class.

F paper The F paper shows little or no effort to engage the assignment.