

SAMPLE GRADING RUBRICS

Sample Holistic Scoring Guide

From the Provost's Seminar on Teaching: "The Philosophy and Practice of Grading"

Session on "Efficient and Effective Approaches to Grading Writing"

Naomi Silver, Sweetland Center for Writing

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6. A **superior** response addresses the question fully and explores the issues thoughtfully. It shows substantial depth, fullness, and complexity of thought. The response demonstrates clear, focused, unified, and coherent organization and is fully developed and detailed. The essay demonstrates superior control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition but may have minor flaws [consistent with timed, first-draft prose].
5. A **strong** response clearly addresses the question and explores the issues. It shows some depth and complexity of thought and is effectively organized. The strong essay is well developed, with supporting detail. It demonstrates control of diction syntactic variety, and transition, though it may have occasional flaws.
4. A **competent** response adequately addresses the question and explores the issues. It shows clarity of thought but may lack complexity. A competent essay is organized and adequately developed, with some detail. This response demonstrates competent writing, though it may have more frequent flaws.
3. A **weak** response may distort or neglect parts of the question. It may be simplistic or stereotyped in thought. It may demonstrate problems in organization. It may use generalizations without supporting detail or detail without generalizations; details may be undeveloped. The weak response shows patterns of error in language, syntax, and/or mechanics.
2. An **inadequate** response demonstrates serious problems in one or more of the areas specified for the weak (3) response. The inadequate response shows numerous errors in language, syntax, and/or mechanics that interfere with meaning.
1. An **incompetent** response fails in its attempt to discuss the topic, or it may be deliberately off-topic. An essay in this category provides little evidence of the ability to develop an organized response. The incompetent response shows pervasive patterns of error in language, syntax, and/or mechanics that result in incoherence.

[Adapted from Edward M. White, *Assigning, Responding, Evaluating: A Writing Teacher's Guide*, 4th ed. (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007), 144-45, 53 and "Rubric for Holistic Scoring of Analysis of an Argument," The University Writing Center, University of Central Florida (http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~uwc/Faculty_Resources/fac_assessing_writing_pages/fac_rubric_analysis.htm), 20 March 2008.]

Sample Letter-Based Rubric

Grading Standards for Essays

The following guidelines clarify the significance of the letter grades used in this college writing class. Though specific expectations and emphases may vary from professor to professor, these standards are generally shared among the college faculty. They appear here in the order of frequency with which I generally assign them.

- B: This is a strong essay that demonstrates careful thought and planning. It coherently argues a clearly stated, compelling thesis, offering sufficient supporting evidence. Throughout the paper, the claims are insightful and well-substantiated, and the diction is precise and thoughtful. Paragraphs are well-developed, transitions clearly mark the direction of the argument, and the organization serves to elucidate the thesis. It contains few mechanical or grammatical errors. *Shorthand 'translations' for B grades: B+ = Very good; B = Good; B- = Pretty good.*
- C: This essay has potential but falls short of its goals, struggling with one or more of the areas in which the B paper succeeds. It sticks to one topic but does not delineate a clear analysis of that topic. It may offer a thesis that is clear but not focused or not debatable. The argument may be vague, inconsistent, simplistic, or self-contradictory; ideas may be buried and the connections between them obscure. Paragraphs may be lacking development, and the organization may hinder effective development of the thesis. This essay may contain several grammatical and mechanical errors or a pattern of error. *Shorthand 'translations' for C grades: C+ = Almost there; C = Not quite; C- = Barely making it.*
- A: This essay is outstanding, excelling in all of the areas in which the B paper succeeds. It successfully takes risks and pushes the bounds of its topic. The thesis is complex, focused, and insightful; the argument is persuasive and thoughtfully elaborated, using especially well-chosen evidence; and the writing style is lucid, engaging, and smooth. This essay contains no mechanical or grammatical errors. *Shorthand 'translations' for A grades: A- = Great!; A = Terrific! Wow!!; A+ = OMG, I'm pretty sure I've never given this grade before!*
- D: This essay resembles an unrevised draft. It does not clearly articulate or develop a focused thesis; it makes illogical, unsupported claims; the organization is confusing or obscures lines of logic. It may jump from topic to topic without apparent reason. The diction is likely to be repetitive and imprecise. There may be serious, distracting mechanical or grammatical errors. *Shorthand 'translations' for D grades: D+ = Barely acceptable but containing some hint of promise; D = Barely acceptable; D- = Lucky not to be failing.*
- F: This essay is unacceptable college work. It indicates a gross lack of preparation for the assignment. This grade also applies to plagiarized work. *Shorthand: Failure.*

Sample Holistic Scoring Guide

6. A **superior** response addresses the question fully and explores the issues thoughtfully. It shows substantial depth, fullness, and complexity of thought. The response demonstrates clear, focused, unified, and coherent organization and is fully developed and detailed. The essay demonstrates superior control of diction, syntactic variety, and transition.
5. A **strong** response clearly addresses the question and explores the issues. It shows some depth and complexity of thought and is effectively organized. The strong essay is well developed, with supporting detail. It demonstrates control of diction syntactic variety, and transition, though it may have occasional flaws.
4. An **adequate** response adequately addresses the question and explores the issues. It shows clarity of thought but may lack complexity. A competent essay is organized and adequately developed, with some detail. This response demonstrates competent writing, though it may have more frequent flaws.
3. A **limited** response may distort or neglect parts of the question. It may be simplistic or stereotyped in thought. It may demonstrate problems in organization. It may use generalizations without supporting detail or detail without generalizations; details may be undeveloped. The weak response shows patterns of error in language, syntax, and/or mechanics.
2. A **seriously flawed** response demonstrates serious problems in one or more of the areas specified for the weak (3) response. The inadequate response shows numerous errors in language, syntax, and/or mechanics that interfere with meaning.
1. A **fundamentally deficient** response fails in its attempt to discuss the topic, or it may be deliberately off-topic. An essay in this category provides little evidence of the ability to develop an organized response. The incompetent response shows pervasive patterns of error in language, syntax, and/or mechanics that result in incoherence.

[Adapted from Naomi Silver, Sweetland Center for Writing, Provost's Seminar on Teaching, session on "Efficient and Effective Approaches to Grading Writing," 24 March 2008.]

Lab Report Grading Rubric

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Score
	0-30	31-35	36-39	40-45	
Introduction	Introduction is missing 2 or more of the 4 required items, or provides little clear information.	Introduction is missing 1 of the 4 required items, or is unclear/vague.	Introduction is complete but unclear, vague or wordy.	Introduction (1) concisely describes the theoretical framework, (2) introduces relevant previous work, (3) briefly previews experimental method, and (4) explains predicted results and how results might differ under an alternative theory.	/45
	0-14	14-15	16-17	18-20	
Methods	Methods section is missing 2 or more of the 3 required items, or provides little clear information.	Methods section is missing 1 of the 3 required items, or is unclear/vague.	Methods section is complete, but is slightly unclear, vague, or wordy.	Methods section clearly and concisely describes exactly what was done was the experiment, including (1) participants, (2) materials, and (3) procedure.	/20
	0-10	10-11	12-13	14-15	
Results	Data is missing or provides little or no clear information.	Data is only partially presented, or there is substantial mixing of data and interpretation.	Data is presented clearly, but there is some mixing of data and interpretation.	Data is presented clearly, with appropriate figures. Interpretation of the data is avoided.	/15
	0-23	24-27	28-30	31-35	
Discussion	Discussion is missing or provides little or no clear information.	Discussion is incomplete, or inaccurate, or illogical, with little evidence of thoughtful interpretation.	Summary and interpretation is accurate but implications are unclear. Significant discrepancies are discussed but possible explanations and/or follow-ups are unclear.	Important results are summarized and used to accept or reject hypotheses. Insights are provided into the wider implications of the results. Possible reasons for significant discrepancies are suggested and specific, practical ways to improve or extend the experiment are identified.	/35
	0-6	7	8	9-10	
Overall Writing Quality	English is garbled or copied from lab instructions, or there are many errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.			English is direct, concise, unambiguous, and original. Style is engaging but not overly conversational. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar are correct.	/10
				Total	/125

EVALUATION: Lab Report _____

Writer: _____

Section Points		Poor					Excellent					Section Scores
		F	D	C	B	A	F	D	C	B	A	
		50	61	75	87	100						
5	Title											
5	Describes lab content concisely, adequately, appropriately											*
5	Abstract											
5	Conveys a sense of the full report concisely and effectively											
20	Introduction											**
3	Successfully establishes the scientific concept of the lab											
10	Effectively presents the objectives and purpose of the lab											
7	States hypothesis and provides logical reasoning for it											
15	Methods											
15	Gives enough details to allow for replication of procedure											
15	Results											
3	Opens with effective statement of overall findings											
2	Presents visuals clearly and accurately											
5	Presents verbal findings clearly and with sufficient support											
5	Successfully integrates verbal and visual representations											
15	Discussion											
3	Opens with effective statement of support of hypothesis											
2	Backs up statement with reference to appropriate findings											
5	Provides sufficient and logical explanation for the statement											
5	Sufficiently addresses other issues pertinent to lab											
10	Conclusion											
10	Convincingly describes what has been learned in the lab											
5	Presentation											
3	Citations and references adhere to proper format											
2	Format of tables and figures is correct											
1	Report is written in scientific style: clear and to the point											
2	Grammar and spelling are correct											
5	Overall aims of the report											
2	Demonstrates understanding of lab's key concepts											
2	Documents clear and thoughtful scientific inquiry											
1	Accurately measures and analyzes data for lab findings											
95												
		Points Earned										
		Total Possible Points										
		Percentage										

*these cells calculate points by multiplying total possible by percentage selected

**these cells calculates total of weighted scores for each section

Note: Interactive versions of this spreadsheet can be found at: labwrite.ncsu.edu/instructors/excelsheets.htm

Essay Grading Rubric

CRITERIA		EXCELLENT	ADEQUATE	NEEDS WORK
Organization	Title, Introduction, Conclusion	Title includes both subject and a hint about the thesis or point of view; engaging introduction that prepares the reader accurately for the body paragraphs; thought-provoking or interesting conclusion that ties everything back together and takes the thesis further	Most but not all of the qualities listed under "Excellent" - there may be roughness or confusion in the introduction or conclusion	No title; introduction and/or conclusion seem to have little to do with the body of the essay
	Thesis/Focus	Excels by responding to the assignment with a clear argumentative thesis in the first paragraph that continues to be the focus of the paper	Has a clearly stated argumentative thesis that the paper basically focuses on.	Thesis is implied or absent, or is stated, but the paper doesn't connect back to it
	Organization	one main idea per paragraph, good use of transitions, clear topic sentences, smooth connections between paragraphs, if an order is set in the introduction, it is followed	mostly one idea or point per paragraph, some transitions, mostly clear topic sentences, okay connections between paragraphs	many ideas per paragraph, missing topic sentences, abrupt transition, and/or missing or rough connections between paragraphs
Development	Development: Support	Uses specific, concrete, relevant details, examples, evidence and numerous references to source material to substantiate and explain thesis	uses support, but it may be insufficient in some areas, or connections between the evidence and ideas might not be clear	lacks sufficient details and examples to support ideas; has insufficient or irrelevant evidence
	Development: Analysis	explains the connections between evidence and main ideas thoughtfully and thoroughly, makes connections explicit, discusses implications, relevance or significance.	mostly explains connections between ideas and evidence, although explanation may be incomplete, or may be missing in some paragraphs. Little discussion of facts and info	does not clearly explain connections between evidence and ideas; does not elaborate beyond basic or obvious conclusions, and/or analysis is too general or brief to be convincing
Mechanics	Sentence Craft & Style	Demonstrates excellent use of language; precisely chosen words, complex and varied sentence structure; appropriate tone and style	adequate use of language, although some words may be vague or imprecise; sentence structure may be simple or awkward in spots, mostly appropriate tone and style	vague and abstract language; words misused; sentences may be monotonous or choppy tone or style may be inappropriate for the assignment
	Mechanics: (Grammar and spelling)	is almost entirely free of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors (one per page or less)	contains a few errors which may distract the reader but not impede meaning (about 2-3 errors per page)	has frequent or extensive errors in diction grammar, punctuation, spelling (more than 4 errors per page)
	Mechanics: MLA	Has smoothly used signal phrases and parenthetical citation in-text; has a citation for every fact or quote; has correctly formatted Works Cited page with few or no errors	mostly cites in-text correctly, but doesn't introduce citations smoothly or uses signal phrases/parenthetical citation inaccurately; Works Cited page has more than a few errors	missing many in-text citations, missing Works Cited page, Works cited page contains only URLs or has other significant omissions or errors