

## **ENGLISH 101—GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING ESSAYS**

In English 101, students compose academic essays that explore and analyze various perspectives on important issues. In these essays, students engage with one or preferably more texts (broadly defined to include film and other media) to support their ideas. In dealing with complex issues and ideas, the student writer should acknowledge that complexity and avoid simplistic analyses. The guidelines below describe the criteria for evaluating an essay as A, B, C, or NC (no credit). Pluses and minuses may be used to make finer qualitative distinctions between letter grades.

### **The "A" essay:**

- presents and sustains a controlling thesis or point of view in a clear, critical, and persuasive manner
- is coherently, logically, and effectively organized through well-developed paragraphs that are unified by specific, vivid, and appropriate details
- demonstrates a substantial, in-depth understanding of the text(s) being employed
- analyzes ideas and issues using well-chosen examples and evidence drawn from one or texts and, if appropriate, the writer's own knowledge and insights
- successfully uses sophisticated diction and sentence structure for rhetorical effect
- contains very few or no errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation
- clearly stands out in terms of its conceptual development, rhetorical structure, insight, and language control

### **The "B" essay:**

- presents and sustains a controlling thesis or point of view in a clear, persuasive manner
- is coherently and logically organized through well-developed paragraphs that are unified by specific and appropriate details
- demonstrates a reasonably good understanding of the text(s) being employed
- analyzes ideas and issues using well-chosen examples and evidence drawn from one or more texts and, if appropriate, the writer's own knowledge and insights
- generally uses sophisticated diction and sentence structure for rhetorical effect
- typically contains a few grammatical errors but none that interfere with meaning
- while clearly a solid piece of writing, lacks the insight, depth of analysis, and control of language found in the "A" paper

### **The "C" essay:**

- presents and generally sustains a controlling thesis or point of view in a fairly clear manner
- is coherently organized through paragraphs that contain specific and appropriate details
- demonstrates a basic understanding of the text(s) being employed
- contains some analysis of ideas and issues using examples and evidence drawn from one or more texts and, if appropriate, the writer's own knowledge and insights
- uses diction and sentence structure to adequately convey meaning

- contains errors in grammar, spelling, or punctuation, but they are not serious or frequent enough to obscure meaning
- adequately fulfills the assignment

**The "NC" essay contains one or more of the following problems:**

- no clear thesis and/or focus
- poor or unclear organization, logic, coherence, or inadequate paragraph development
- little analysis of issues, indicating an inability to examine an issue critically
- little effort to refer to text(s) or failure to integrate them appropriately into the essay
- overgeneralizations or irrelevancies; inappropriate, confusing, or inaccurate examples
- weakness in word choice and/or sentence structure that obscures meaning
- numerous grammatical and mechanical errors that interfere with meaning