

Orange County Community College
English Department Grading Criteria for Freshman English (ENG 101)

The English faculty, wishing to make clear its departmental guidelines for grading student essays, offers the following rubric to all those interested in understanding the criteria on which essays are judged. The rubric describes in detail how we reach our judgments, making distinctions in five basic categories pertinent to all essay writing. It should be noted that, though the criteria for grading decisions are explicit, they are not to be taken as a rigid formula for achieving grades. These grading criteria are flexible and are to be used with the common sense and good judgment of each instructor.

	A	B
Focus	Well-constructed, clearly discernible, thoughtful thesis sentence limits topic, directs & controls the body of the essay; all ideas in the essay are pertinent to this thesis	Recognizable thesis statement, limiting the topic, giving reader a clear idea of how the essay will proceed
Organization & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Method immediately apparent • Progresses logically & smoothly to conclusion • Ideas given appropriate emphasis • Effective topic sentences and transitions between ¶s • Coherent, unified, proportioned ¶s • Significant supporting details consistently relevant to thesis • Conclusion grows out of essay's thesis, typically speaking to implications rather than simply summarizing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear organization • Effectively proceeds to conclusion • Topic sentences and transitions present, show relationships between ¶s • No significant errors of coherence • Supporting ¶s usually contain pertinent details which develop main points of the essay • Conclusion typically summarizes the main idea of the essay
Sentence Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skillful and varied sentence patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sentence structure fundamentally sound, free of major errors, although occasionally awkward
Control of Fundamentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistent in use of standard English grammar & usage, punctuation, and spelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uses standard English grammar & usage, punctuation & spelling • Minor errors of form, when they occur, do not retard effective communication
Diction & Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocab appropriately precise, idiomatic & economical • Distinctive and consistent voice throughout the essay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocab appropriate & idiomatic • Avoids clichés, inappropriate use of slang and jargon for the most part • Voice present but not necessarily distinctive or consistent

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	C	D
Focus	Discernible central idea limits the topic, little divergence throughout the essay; however, central idea is typically simplistic or imprecisely stated	Central idea too general or confused; some indication of how essay will proceed; however, the essay does not proceed as expected
Organization & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essay has intro, body, conclusion • Plan and/or method of development not consistently fulfilled, although it does proceed to a conclusion • Topic sentences and transitions between ¶s sometimes present but often abrupt, mechanical or monotonous • Supporting ¶s include details & examples, but ideas are not logically pursued; supporting detail repetitious, seemingly irrelevant or sketchy • ¶s have some unity & coherence, however limited • Conclusion often restates central idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some evidence of planning although plan is not always apparent • Ideas are held together by tenuous threads • Paragraphs begin with general statements which are frequently unrelated to the central idea, to each other or to the supporting details • Details tend to be unrelated or not clearly related to each other
Sentence Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Usually correct but lack variety and skillful construction • Writer lacks sense of what constitutes adequate subordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shows rudimentary grasp of sentence structure, but there are occasional sentence fragments, comma splices or fused sentences
Control of Fundamentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essentially correct grammar & usage, punctuation, & spelling • Occasional incorrect forms, but errors not frequent or severe enough to obscure communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamentals are generally present; however, essay doesn't demonstrate consistent control of grammar, usage, punctuation and spelling
Diction & Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocab usually correct idiomatic & essentially appropriate but lacks variety • Essay lacks a clear, distinctive voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocab is simple, imprecise, or redundant • Slang is mixed inappropriately with standard English

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F	
Focus	Lacks a central idea, or that idea is confused; topic is inadequately restricted. Little or no indication of how the essay will proceed
Organization & Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no evidence of having been planned • Supporting ¶s are randomly connected • Topic sentences and transitions between ¶s are often absent, and transitions within paragraphs are unclear or ineffective. • Supporting paragraphs include few examples or details; the examples are usually irrelevant, disconnected or undeveloped • Paragraphs lack unity and coherence
Sentence Structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant problems of sentence structure: fragments, fused sentences, comma splices • Frequently sentences are monotonous, awkward, or confused
Control of Fundamentals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication is frequently impeded by deviations from standard grammar and usage, punctuation, and spelling
Diction & Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vocab is vague, inappropriate, unidiomatic, or substandard • Slang is mixed inappropriately with standard English

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