

		Excellent	Satisfactory	Needs Improvement
C O N T E N T A N D O R G A N I Z A T I O N	Response to topic/Thesis	Makes a strong, insightful assertion (i.e., thesis) that addresses the topic clearly and moves beyond the predictable; takes a risk and explores issues thoughtfully and in depth	Demonstrates some insight into the topic, but the assertion is predictable or merely reflects class ideas	Suggests confusion about the topic, neglects important aspects of the problem; lacks focus or demonstrates confused or simplistic thinking
	Supporting Detail	Uses significant, rich detail that proves thesis; essay contains at least 3 significant main ideas that support thesis	Uses some details or examples, but could be extended to show more understanding and/or support	Lacks concrete, relevant details or quotes that prove thesis; provides simplistic generalization; unclear
	Commentary/ Analysis	Original commentary analyzes and interprets details, quotes, and examples, showing how they relate to the thesis	Explains significance of details, but analysis could be expanded to show stronger connection to thesis or provide more insight about the details	Commentary is lacking or is predictable and disconnected, summarizing instead of analyzing significance; shows no clear connection of details to thesis
	Use of quotes	*Uses 3 quotations that clearly support the thesis *Introduces quotations correctly by setting the context and mentioning the speaker *Clearly explains significance of quotes	*Uses 3 quotes *Commentary on quotes addresses issue, but could be pushed further	*Uses fewer than 3 quotes OR quotes do not support topic *Quotes need more commentary *Fails to introduce quotes; formats quotes incorrectly
	Organization	*Has clear, sophisticated organization; body paragraphs relate back to thesis *Paragraph parts flow seamlessly	*Has adequate organization *Paragraphs have all key parts	*Weak organization makes argument hard to follow; body paragraphs need clearer relation to thesis; *Paragraphs are missing key parts
	Transitions	Uses thoughtful transitions between all ideas at the essay and paragraph levels for the smooth progression of ideas	Uses transitions between and within paragraphs, but they may seem awkward or forced	Has inconsistent transitions at either the paragraph or essay level
	Introduction/ Conclusion	*Has an introduction that grabs reader's attention *Has a conclusion that provokes further thought	*Has introduction, but it may not draw reader in; *Has a conclusion, but it may not tie up loose ends	Introduction and/or conclusion is simplistic and could be more engaging and/or clearer OR lacks an introduction and/or conclusion
S T Y L E	Command of Language (Voice)	Language is natural and captures the writer's "voice"	Language is adequate, but doesn't reflect unique voice	Language is formulaic and contains use of passive voice and/or 2 nd person "you"
	Word Choice	Striking, vivid words catch the reader's eye; strong use of action verbs	Some use of active verbs and strong words; lapses into "to be" verbs at times	Includes wordy expressions, repetition of the verbs "is" and "has"
	Sentence Variety	Shows mastery over a variety of sentence openers and structures and uses them appropriately	Contains some varied sentence structure; most sentences follow subject-verb pattern	Does not contain much sentence variety
	Grammar	*Has no BIG 5 errors or other grammar errors *Uses present tense to discuss literature *Proofreading is present	*Grammar errors do not disrupt the flow of the paper *Some proofreading is present	*1 or more BIG 5 error *Fails to use present tense to discuss literature