**EVALUATING THEMES AND TERM PAPERS**

**Term paper**: (definitions)

* A long essay or report, written by a student as an assignment over the course of a term or semester.
* A **term paper** is a research paper written by [students](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Student) over an [academic term](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Academic_term), accounting for a large part of a grade. Term papers are generally intended to describe an event, a concept, or argue a point.

**History:**

Term papers date back to the beginning of the 19th century when print could be reproduced cheaply and written texts of all types (reports, memoranda, specifications, and scholarly articles) could be easily produced and disseminated.

**Rubric:**

A rubric is a grading tool that describes the criteria, or "what counts," for the assignment.  It also describes each of the criteria according to gradations of quality, with descriptions of strong, middling, and problematic student work.

Heidi Andrade defined rubric as:

“Rubric is a document that articulates the expectations for assignment by listing and describing levels of quality from excellent to poor.”

[**Evaluating Writing Assignments**](javascript:OpenPage('http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/teaching/grading/index.cfm')) begins with your grading criteria. These must be established and announced at the time assignment is given.

How much of the assignment involves writing to learn, and how much learning to write?

**Grading Criteria for Writing Assignments and Essay**:

These criteria define the categories essential to the success of an essay. Essays are evaluated based on these elements, each of which must fulfill a specific function to support the overall effectiveness of the essay.  Depending on the assignment, certain criteria may be weighted more than others, and the instructor's assignment may establish additional, more specific criteria.

**Thesis.** The thesis is the central idea of the essay that is appropriate for the assignment, gives the essay a controlling sense of purpose, and establishes a sustained and consistent focus. The thesis statement concisely expresses the main idea and previews the supporting ideas.

**Audience.** The content and style are tailored for the intended audience.

**Organization.**

**Essay**. An essay demonstrates a logical progression of ideas, provides clear and smooth transitions among ideas, and uses structure appropriate to an academic essay.

**Body Paragraph Structure.** A body paragraph includes a main idea expressed in a topic sentence strongly tied to the stated thesis, unified supporting details, and clear connections among ideas.

**Introduction and Conclusion.** An introduction captures the reader’s attention, transitions to the topic by giving context or background information, and presents the thesis statement. A conclusion reemphasizes the essay’s thesis and main ideas and provides a sense of closure. Conclusion section summarizes arguments in support of goal.

**Support.**

**Development of Ideas.** A well-developed essay supports the thesis with ample evidence; uses a variety of specific examples, quotations, or other details; and explains the evidence to show its connections to the thesis.

**Level of Thought.** The essay presents clear, sophisticated, insightful ideas that recognize the complexity of the topic without inaccuracies or errors in reasoning.

**Expression.**

**Use of Standard Written English.** The essay is written in Standard English without errors in sentence boundaries, spelling, punctuation, mechanics, and grammar.

**Style.** The student writes in a consistent, academic tone, using varied sentence structure and accurate and precise word choice.

**Use and Documentation of Sources.** The essay accurately quotes and paraphrases credible sources, effectively balances source material with the writer’s own ideas, and cites and documents correctly according to the standards of the discipline. At least 8 sources properly listed on bibliography page according to MLA/APA format, and all sources listed in the bibliography are parenthetically cited correctly in the text.

**Format.** The essay is formatted according to the standards of the discipline.

The essay meets assignment requirements.

**TERM PAPER EVALUATION (Sheet)**

Course\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Student\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Mark\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Marker\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

CONTENT: (Use of appropriate sources, including course readings; relevance to course themes.) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ARGUMENT: (Do you present a coherent and reasonable argument? Is it consistent with, and supported by,   
your evidence? Is it logically consistent? Does it take into account major counter arguments?) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION: (Clear introduction, setting out the central topic(s) or question(s), and how   
you will proceed to address them, systematic exposition of ideas, not straying from the topic,   
and leading to a conclusion.)  
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STYLE: (Grammar, literacy; intelligibility of expression; acknowledgement of sources;   
consistent footnote and bibliography style.)  
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OTHER COMMENTS:   
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**Rubric for Evaluation of the Paragraph**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Point Value** | **2 points** | **1 points** | **.5 points** | **0 points** |
| **Topic Sentence** | Interesting, original topic sentence, reflecting thought and insight; focused on one interesting main idea. | Clearly stated topic sentence presents one main idea. | Acceptable topic sentence presents one idea. | Missing, invalid, or inappropriate topic sentence;  main idea is missing. |
| **Supporting Details** | Interesting, concrete and descriptive examples and details with explanations that relate to the topic. | Examples and details relate to the topic and some explanation is included. | Sufficient number of examples and details that relate to the topic. | Insufficient, vague, or undeveloped examples. |
| **Organization and Transitions** | Thoughtful, logical progression of supporting examples; Mature transitions between ideas. | Details are arranged in a logical progression; appropriate transitions. | Acceptable arrangement of examples; transitions may be weak. | No discernible pattern of organization; Unrelated details; no transitions. |
| **Style** | Appropriate tone, distinctive voice; pleasing variety in sentence structure; Vivid diction, precise word choices. | Appropriate tone; Clear sentences with varied structures; Effective diction. | Acceptable tone; some variety in sentence structures; Adequate diction and word choices. | Inconsistent or Inappropriate tone; Awkward, unclear, or incomplete sentences; Bland diction, poor word choice. |
| **Mechanics** | Consistent standard English usage, spelling, and punctuation. No errors. | Some errors, but none major, in usage, spelling, or punctuation. (1-2) | A few errors in usage, spelling, or punctuation (3-4) | Distracting errors in usage, spelling, or punctuation |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Topic Sentences                                      \_\_\_\_\_\_ Supporting Details and Organization    \_\_\_\_\_\_ Organization/Transitions                        \_\_\_\_\_\_ Style                                                          \_\_\_\_\_\_ Mechanics                                                \_\_\_\_\_\_               Total Points  \_\_\_\_\_\_ = grade of \_\_\_\_\_\_** **\*Your instructor will average the scores of both paragraphs to generate your final grade for Assignment #1.** | **Grade Equivalent:**  A =  8 - 10 points B =  6 -7  points C =  4 - 5 points D =  2 - 3 points F =  0 - 1 |