

Research Paper Grading Criteria

Item↓ Rating→	Outstanding	Good	Marginal	Unsatisfactory	Score
Topic Selection 10 points	Challenging; requires significant intellectual resources; potential for a new or different perspective.	Requires above average intellectual work; some potential for a new or different perspective.	Requires modest intellectual work; limited potential for new or different perspective.	Requires little or no intellectual work; minimal potential for different perspectives.	
Content 30 points	Focused; every paragraph works to support an easily identifiable thesis; contains enough material to treat the topic fully and convincingly; paragraphs typically display rich development; sources are relevant and credible, and their scope brings a multi-dimensional perspective to the topic. Writing is exceptionally clear, focused, and interesting. It holds the reader's attention throughout. Main ideas stand out and are developed by strong support and rich details suitable to audience and purpose.	Thesis is easily identifiable and solidly supported; minimal lapses in focus; contains enough material to treat the topic well, but occasionally could go into more depth; paragraphs frequently display rich development; sources are relevant and credible, but could be a bit broader in scope. Writing is clear, focused and interesting. It holds the reader's attention. Main ideas stand out and are developed by supporting details suitable to audience and purpose.	Thesis is easily identifiable, but support for it periodically lapses due to a loss of focus; contains enough material to do basic justice to the topic; paragraphs sometimes lack adequate development; sources are limited in scope, and one or two have questionable relevance or credibility. The reader can understand the main ideas, although they may be overly broad or simplistic, and the results may not be effective. Supporting detail is often limited, insubstantial, overly general, or occasionally slightly off-topic.	The paper drifts; it has no clear thesis and, thus, its focus frequently lapses; the material is sketchy in its support of the topic; paragraphs frequently lack a point or are undeveloped; not enough relevant, credible sources used. Writing lacks a central idea or purpose.	
Organization 20 points	The structure of the material is readily discernible and moves the reader surely through the text; the introduction sparks interest in the topic, provides context that prepares a reader to read with understanding, and steers the reader easily to the thesis; the conclusion provides a thoughtful endpoint and satisfying sense of closure. The organization enhances the central idea(s) and its development.	The structure of the material is readily discernible and moves the reader surely through the text; the introduction is competent but perhaps a bit strained or trite and less than thorough in undertaking necessary preliminaries; the conclusion is competent but somewhat lacking in thoughtfulness or in providing a sense of closure	The organizational structure is barely strong enough to move the reader through the text without undue confusion; the introduction and conclusion are functional but mechanical. An attempt has been made to organize the writing; however, the overall structure is inconsistent or skeletal.	The writing lacks a clear sense of direction; ideas or details seem strung together loosely or randomly, or there is no identifiable structure, the introduction and conclusion are either missing or superficially done. The writing lacks coherence; organization seems haphazard and disjointed. Even after rereading, the reader remains confused.	
Documentation 20 points	Sources, whether quoted, paraphrased, or summarized, are correctly cited within the text and properly documented in the bibliography at the end of the text. The writing demonstrates exceptionally strong commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Documentation is used to avoid plagiarism and to enable the reader to judge how believable or important a piece of information is by checking the source.	Minor errors in the in-text citations or bibliography; a reader can easily identify where sources are used. The writing demonstrates a strong commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Documentation is used to avoid plagiarism and to enable the reader to judge how believable or important a piece of information is by checking the source. Errors are so few and so minor that the reader can easily skim right over them unless specifically searching for them.	A occasional flawed or missing in-text citation obscures the source being used; a source documented in the bibliography occasionally lacks required information. The writing demonstrates a limited commitment to the quality and significance of research and the accuracy of the written document. Documentation is sometimes used to avoid plagiarism and to enable the reader to judge how believable or important a piece of information is by checking the source.	Sources are often not cited or documented, and often stray from the proper form. The writing demonstrates disregard for the conventions of research writing. Lack of proper documentation result in plagiarism and do not enable the reader to check the source.	
Style/Expression 10 points	The words convey the meaning in a precise, natural way; the writing has energy and compels interest throughout; sentences are varied in structure, flow easily, and are clear; a reader would not have to stop and puzzle over what they mean.	Word choice shows care, but every so often it is imprecise or seems forced; the writing is solid and clear, but only on occasion does it compel interest.	Word choice is periodically imprecise, even incorrect at times; the writing is functional but overall is unremarkable; sentences seem mechanical in construction; at times, a sentence may be awkward, tangled, or puzzling.	Words are too often imprecise or incorrectly chosen; the writing lacks fluidity; a reader would have to work too hard to understand many of the sentences.	
Correctness 10 points	The writer demonstrates a solid grasp of the conventions of standard English; errors in grammar, usage, spelling, and sentence structure are so few or minor that they would not derail a reader's movement through the text.	The writer demonstrates a solid grasp of the conventions of standard English; however, there are a few noticeable errors that a careful proofreading should have caught.	The writer shows a reasonable control of standard English writing conventions; errors are minimal, but serious enough to detract from the text's readability.	Error in grammar, usage, spelling, and sentence structure repeatedly distract a reader and make the text a chore to read.	
Grade					

Please attach a copy of this sheet to your paper when you submit it.