

10 Grading Standards in English 101 at Coppin State University

- A An “A” level essay demonstrates a high degree of competence in response to the assignment but may have a few minor errors.

An “A” level essay:

- is well-organized and coherently developed
- has a strong introduction and conclusion that clearly lay out the purpose and importance of the paper’s topic
- accommodates itself well to its intended audience, often to the point of showing awareness and understanding of other points of view
- clearly explains or illustrates key ideas, using concrete details, description, or other appropriate evidence
- citations or attributions of sources are done correctly and appropriately
- displays exceptional facility in the use of language; the prose is clear, coherent, and even occasionally memorable
- is generally free from errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure; what few errors there are do not undermine the overall effectiveness of the paper
- has a clear and distinctive voice

- B A “B” level essay demonstrates clear competence in response to the assignment but may have minor errors.

A “B” level essay:

- is generally well-organized and coherently developed
- appropriately addresses its intended audience, possibly showing awareness of other viewpoints
- clearly explains or illustrates key ideas, using concrete details, description, or other appropriate evidence in a compelling and affecting manner. Some evidence may be obvious or problematic in some way, but the writer does not consistently settle for the obvious
- introduction and conclusion are clear, but perhaps not as forceful as they could be. Most paragraphs follow well and are appropriately divided, though one or two could be better placed or developed further.
- displays exceptional facility in the use of language; using correct sentence structure, subordination, emphasis, sentence length and other syntactic variations are present. There are no serious sentence errors, such as run-ons or fragments, present.
- is generally free from errors in mechanics and usage; punctuation, grammar, and spelling are consistent with the standards of Standard English Grammar.
- has noticeable voice

C A “C” level essay demonstrates minimum competence in response to the assignment.

A “C” level essay:

- presents an appropriate thesis, but that thesis may be too broad or the audience might, for some reason, have trouble immediately identifying the thesis
- is adequately organized and developed; the transition between logical elements of the paper is in general clear;
- explains or illustrates the key ideas of the paper with appropriate descriptions, analysis or other evidence, but may feature flaws in evidence or reasoning; awareness of other points of view is present but limited
- demonstrates adequate facility with language; while the prose adheres to the constraints of Standard English Grammar, syntactic variety, subordination, and other sophisticated elements of sentence structure may be lacking; the essay may be written in a “wooden” style.
- may display some errors in mechanics, usage, and sentence structure but does not display a consistent pattern of such errors.
- is competent in these areas but may lack a sense of the writer’s voice

D A “D” level essay demonstrates some degree of competence in response to the assignment but is clearly flawed.

A “D” level essay:

- suffers from a poor sense of audience and limited sense of purpose; the topic may be banal or the approach to it superficial;
- the thesis cannot be discerned without significant work on the part of the audience
- suffers from problematic or counter-intuitive organization or inadequate development and depth
- inadequate explanation or illustration of key ideas; inadequate use of concrete and relevant details; irrelevant information may instead be present; the reasoning will necessarily be flawed
- displays a pattern or accumulation of errors in mechanics, usage, or sentence structure
- uses limited or inappropriate word choice
- features one repeated major error* or two different major errors and an accumulation of minor errors

F An “F” level essay demonstrates only limited competence and it is seriously flawed.

An “F” essay reveals one or more of the following weaknesses:

- is off assignment
- presents an unclear or unidentifiable thesis
- weak organization or very little development
- problems with coherence or staying on topic

- problems with selecting appropriate evidence
- little or no relevant details
- serious errors in mechanics, usage, sentence structure, or word choice
- two repeated major errors or three different major errors and an accumulation of minor errors

*Major errors include repeated errors in possession, tense, spelling, vague pronoun reference, fused sentences, fragments, comma splices, mistakes in subject-verb agreement and other inflectional problems.

Elements of this document were adapted from the University of Maryland, College Park Freshman Writing Program textbook, *Introduction to Academic Writing*.