

Cisco College Suggested Grading Standards for Composition Papers

An "A" Essay

- establishes a clear thesis
- offers relevant, organized evidence
- is clearly written with varied sentence structure, effective transitions, and vivid language
- contains no more than 3 (if any) small grammatical/syntax/spelling errors, none of which distract from the writer's meaning
- is free of serious errors *
- follows MLA style

A "B" Essay

- establishes a clear thesis, though it lacks the originality of the A essay
- offers relevant evidence and is generally well-organized
- contains clear, though ordinary, language with mechanical transitions
- contains no more than 5 small grammatical/syntax/spelling errors, which may distract from the writer's meaning
- may contain no more than 3 serious errors *
- follows MLA style

A "C" Essay

- has difficulty establishing a thesis or contains an unoriginal or unclear thesis
- offers weak or overly-general, loosely organized evidence
- contains decipherable main points, weak transitions, and awkward or generic language
- contains frequent small grammatical/syntax/spelling errors which interfere with the writer's meaning
- may contain 4 or more serious errors *
- contains errors in MLA style

A "D" Essay

- lacks a thesis
- contains insufficient, or perhaps lacks, evidence and has serious organizational problems, making it difficult to reconstruct the writer's train of thought
- contains vague language that lacks transitions
- contains repeated small grammatical/syntax/spelling errors and serious errors * that distract from the writer's meaning
- contains serious errors in MLA style

An "F" Essay may contain any one of the following errors:

- is incomplete
- is plagiarized
- does not follow the assignment
- is riddled with serious errors
- does not follow MLA style

* A serious error is defined as a(n):

- *Run-on (fused sentence or comma splice)*
- *Sentence fragment*
- *Agreement error (subject-verb or pronoun-antecedent)*
- *Shift (voice or tense)*
- *Spelling (misspelled word, wrong word, or homophone)*