

GRADING RUBRIC AND CHECK LIST

IDEAS

Position and Intro

After reading the introduction, does your reader understand:

- The topic?
- The scope?
- Your intent?
- The stakes?
- The surrounding conversation and why it matters?
- Is your position statement identifiable, with *purpose* and clear *boundaries*?
- Is your position statement sustainable—will the position support a nuanced and satisfying paper?

Watch out for:

- ⊗ Unidentifiable, wishy washy, vague, or superficial position statements
- ⊗ A scattered intro that crams in too much.

The Conversation

- Have you clearly and accurately engaged the assigned texts?
- Have you introduced the involved materials, along with the pertinent voices?
- Have you clearly signaled each summary, paraphrase, and quotation as such?
- When necessary, do you provide your quotes context to aid understanding?
- Do your quoted and paraphrased passages and summaries serve your ideas?
- Do you clearly articulate how your evidence relates (i.e. supports, develops, complicates) your claim?

Watch out for:

- ⊗ Dislocated “hit-and-run” quotes. Always connect quoted materials back to the ideas contained in your claims and position.

Writer as Driver

- Are your ideas front and center and do they reflect a deep understanding of the texts with which you engage?
- Do your ideas move the paper forward?
- Do your claim sentences work to develop or support your ideas as expressed in your position?
- Is your analysis fresh, nuanced, and honest?
- Have you used synthesis to create new meaning?

Watch out for:

- ⊗ Claim sentences that use paraphrase and summary. If you find this is the case, try revising your sentences to serve your own ideas.
- ⊗ Losing sight of the gray areas, the complications, and messy details for the sake of an easy argument.
- ⊗ An insecure relationship with the reading material. Strong, active reading leads to strong analysis and new connections.

ORGANIZATION

- Does your paper follow a logical path? Does each paragraph lead naturally one to the other?
- Is there a logical relationship between your claim sentences and the original position statement?
- Is there a discernable relationship between your evidence and the claim sentences they support?
- Are your paragraphs a reasonable length?
- Does your conclusion—while rooted in your paper’s main themes—also introduce new directions for thought?

Watch out for:

- ⊗ “Island paragraphs” that feel dislocated from the paper’s line of logic.
- ⊗ One sentence paragraphs and/or paragraphs that go on for a page.
- ⊗ “Coyote paragraphs” that run over logical cliffs with little to no support
- ⊗ Repeating similar arguments in different paragraphs
- ⊗ Conclusions that simply repeat your essay’s main points

CLARITY, MLA, ETC.

- Is your paper correctly formatted?
- Are your sentences clean, complete, and readable? (Try reading out loud)
- Are your words correctly spelled and punctuated?
- Does the paper have a correctly formatted Works Cited page?
- Does your paper follow correct MLA style when citing a source in-text?
- Has your paper achieved the assigned word count?

Watch out for:

- ⊗ Run on sentences and sentences that lose track of the subject and verb. Quite often a muddled sentence can help you identify thoughts that need further development.
- ⊗ Dismissing formatting details as unnecessary. This can make your work look unprofessional.