

**Talking about Teaching: English 102
Holistic Grading Sessions, Spring 2006**

Grading Rubric

Areas for Evaluation

1. = Response to the topic/quality of critical thinking
2. = Organization of the paper (overall plan, coherence of paragraphs)
3. = Support/development
4. = Sentence-level concerns

Students may exhibit varying degrees of competence in each of the above areas. Some students, for example, might perform very well in their critical thinking but have extensive problems in organization or at the sentence-level; other students might have neatly organized essays with strong sentence-level mastery but superficial content and poor engagement with the texts. The difference between each of the categories below is primarily a question of the *extent* of a student's difficulty in one or more areas.

Characteristics of an "High Pass" paper

An "High Pass" paper is a superior response to the specific audience and purpose of the assignment, with only minor flaws in the areas below. A typical essay in this category:

- 1 effectively meets all of the requirements of the task, provides a clear and focused response to the assignment; demonstrates an understanding of complex ideas, an ability to analyze and synthesize different types of information (including quotations/paraphrases from the background readings) in order to develop and express the student's own idea/position; paper includes attention to areas of ambiguity/complexity in the topic, rather than an oversimplified stance.
- 2 is unified around a central idea; the organization of the paper reflects a clear plan and ideas are not forced into cookie-cutter outline (e.g. 5-paragraph theme); the paper contains coherent paragraphs and moves smoothly from one idea to another.
3. ideas are developed and sustained throughout paper (e.g.: students don't just make a point and give one example; instead they might explore the "why" or "how" of an idea, discuss implications and/or significance); ideas are supported by adequate and relevant examples, concrete details, explanations, and other support; effectively uses textual evidence, including appropriate quotations and paraphrases.
4. demonstrates developing sentence maturity (including, for instance, use of embedded modifiers as well as subordination and coordination); demonstrates evidence of successful proofreading.

Characteristics of a “Pass” paper

A “Pass” paper is clearly competent for the specific audience and purpose of the assignment. It may include some lapses in the areas below, but these are not extensive enough to distort the meaning of the paper, confuse the reader, or otherwise undermine its overall effectiveness. A typical essay in this category:

1. responds to the major elements of the assignment; demonstrates a generally sound understanding of complex ideas, though may include localized misreadings of text or inattention to more nuanced areas of the topic, a good ability to analyze and synthesize information (including quotations/paraphrases from the background readings), though the students’ critical commentary/ideas may not go as deeply into implications or the “how” and “why” of their topic. May include some oversimplified thinking.
2. is focused on a central idea; paper has a clear plan of development, though order and flow of ideas may not be most effective for audience/purpose; paragraphs are generally unified.
3. ideas are supported by appropriate reasons and examples, though some support may be less specific and some explanations less thorough or clear; uses textual evidence, including appropriate quotations and paraphrases; integration of textual evidence is generally good.
4. demonstrates some sentence maturity (including, for instance, use of embedded modifiers as well as subordination and coordination) but may still rely on short, simple sentences; proofreading may be uneven or insufficient.

Characteristics of a “Low Pass” paper

A “Low Pass” paper demonstrates low-adequate competence for the specific purpose and audience of the assignment but exhibits more extensive difficulties in one or more of the areas that interfere with the paper’s overall credibility or readability. A typical essay in this category:

1. responds to the task but may misunderstand or omit some aspects of the assignment; displays a basic level of understanding of topic but there may be lapses in which result in weak analysis and less effective synthesis of information; uses textual evidence but may reflect misunderstanding or misinterpretation of the texts; some integration of textual evidence but may contain undigested chunks of source material with minimal explanatory or critical commentary from student; likely to contain oversimplified thinking about topic.
2. is focused around a central idea, although it may stray into irrelevant digressions; there is some attempt at organization, but ideas may be sequenced ineffectively and may exhibit lapses in paragraph coherence.

3. there is some attention to development/support of ideas, though support may be limited, overly general, or not fully explained; may include generalizations with little support or details without generalizations; uses textual evidence but exhibits difficulty in this area (e.g. irrelevant or poorly integrated quotes).

4. may include segments of choppy, immature writing and an accumulation of proofreading errors that interfere with meaning, but the paper as a whole is still largely understandable.

Characteristics of a “NP” (No Pass) paper:

An “NP” paper is not an acceptable response to the specific audience and purpose of the assignment. It contains extensive difficulties in the areas below, and these seriously undermine its readability. A typical essay in this category:

1. may not respond appropriately to the assignment; may include a misunderstanding of key ideas, inadequate analysis, and an inability to synthesize information; may not engage the assigned texts.

2. either lacks a central idea altogether or has one that is too vague, obvious, or simplistic to be adequately developed; no attempt at organization is evident; paragraphs lack unity and coherence.

3. may contain generalizations that are not adequately supported; few or no specific examples; little to no textual evidence; unexplained ideas, and/or quotes not integrated; poor paraphrasing skills; over-reliance on authors' language (indicating a possible reading comprehension issue).

4. contains sentences that are immature with an abundance of short, choppy sentences; poor proofreading distracts the reader from easily following the ideas.