

Essay Grading Rubric

A Paper

- Has an intriguing, creative, clear thesis statement or theme that expresses intellectual thought and challenges conventional ideas
- Thesis or theme is supported by well developed paragraphs structured with strong topic sentences, textual evidence and/or references to prior discussions, lectures or individual and group reflection
- Writing and language used throughout paper displays proper usage of grammar, spelling and mechanics with very few (if any at all) errors
- Original and captivating opening and closing paragraphs that incorporate all of the above elements
- Paper engages the reader and also reflects critical thinking and analysis

B Paper

- Has a clear and concise thesis statement or theme that demonstrates an understanding of the topic to be discussed
- Thesis or theme is supported by adequately structured paragraphs with topic sentences, some textual evidence and/or references to prior discussions, lectures or individual and group reflection
- Writing and language used throughout paper shows a basic understanding of grammar, spelling and mechanics, with some errors
- Well developed opening and closing paragraphs that incorporate a majority of the above elements
- Paper displays competence in critical thinking and analysis

C Paper

- Has a thesis or theme that is simple, broad and satisfactory to fulfilling assignment
- Thesis or theme is somewhat connected to paragraphs that moderately incorporate evidence to support the topic of the paper, not necessarily using topic sentences, textual evidence and/or references to prior discussions, lectures or individual and group reflection—paper does not reflect higher level thinking
- Writing and language used throughout paper demonstrates a vague understanding of grammar, spelling and mechanics, with several errors
- Opening and closing paragraph lack effort and do not incorporate a majority of the above mentioned elements
- Paper communicates general ideas to the reader, but rarely includes critical thinking and analysis

Unsatisfactory Paper (D or F)

- No identifiable thesis or theme
- Paragraphs are not structured and lack topic sentences and organization
- Writing and language used throughout paper does not demonstrate proper use of grammar, spelling, and mechanics and contains excessive errors
- Opening and closing paragraphs are not clearly developed
- Paper poorly communicates ideas to the reader and does not reflect critical thinking and analysis—paper does not meet requirements

Essay Assignment Requirements: Paper must be 3-5 pages in length, double spaced, 12 point font, Times New Roman or similar font. The topic is of your choosing, but must include a critical analysis of at least one author's text we have read this semester (if opting for the academic essay). You also have the option to write a slave narrative. Instructions are on the back of the rubric and grading will still follow the general guidelines listed above. Do not include any secondary sources in your paper, unless it is a source we reviewed in class and/or is posted on iLearn. Primary sources (the assigned readings) are allowed and it is required you include textual evidence within your paper to strengthen your discussion/argument (unless writing a slave narrative). Students may choose to write in whatever style they are comfortable with, although MLA is encouraged. Proper grammar and spelling will be considered when calculating the grade so be sure to edit and proof read. Final paper is worth 20 points total (4 points possible for each bullet point defined above). The abstract is worth 5 points making the final paper assignment 25% of your grade (as indicated on the syllabus). **Final paper is due** Sunday, December 6th by 11:59pm.

ALTERNATIVE ESSAY ASSIGNMENT—SLAVE NARRATIVE:

Imagine you are an African or African American living in the United States prior to the abolishment of slavery (pre 1865). Using the guidelines discussed during lecture and class, write your own slave narrative. While this narrative will be fictitious, it should be realistic in that it references actual scenarios or experiences enslaved Africans and African Americans endured. You can write from a female or male perspective, but will need to include the following:

- A picture or portrait of the author, often signed (Optional)
- **A title page that includes the claim, "Written by Himself/Herself"**
- **A testimonial or a preface(s) or introductions**
- Sometimes a poetic epigraph or bible verse (Optional)
- **The actual narrative (must be 3-5 pages)**

Please take this assignment seriously. The institution of enslavement was unjust, horrific, and dehumanized Africans/African Americans in the United States and throughout the world. Your narrative should be mindful and reflective of the history and struggles the Black community was forced to live through. Reference the two narratives read in class (Equiano's and Jacob's) for an idea of the writing style and language you should use for your fictional narrative. Also, look back on lecture notes from Week 4 to incorporate common themes and/or patterns of the slave narrative genre.

ABSTRACT INSTRUCTIONS: DUE Sunday, October 18th by 11:59pm

- You are required to submit an abstract outlining and discussing the topic of your final paper. **The template and format for the abstract assignment is provided on iLearn.** You will select either the Slave Narrative option or Academic Essay option. Download the appropriate abstract assignment document and follow the instructions provided.
- **THE ABSTRACT IS WORTH FIVE POINTS TOWARDS YOUR FINAL GRADE.**
- The purpose of the abstract is to get you thinking about the final essay. I will provide feedback and suggestions based on what you submit.
- I understand that you may change your mind as to what you want to write about for the final paper, which is acceptable. The abstract is a tool that will help you start the process of brainstorming and formulating your ideas for the final paper assignment.