

Essay Marking Guide

Essay Features	A-Level	B-Level	C-Level	D-Level	N-Level
Thesis and Essay Task	<u>One basic level for levels A, B, and C</u> The essay meets the following criteria: (1) It has a clearly identifiable thesis, and (2) this thesis and the discussion as a whole are on topic and clearly address your chosen essay question.			The essay does a poor job of addressing one or both of these criteria.	The essay does a very poor job of addressing one or both of these criteria.
Exposition	The exposition does an excellent job of <i>demonstrating</i> your understanding of the <i>relevant</i> views and readings by being: (1) accurate, (2) suitably in-depth and detailed, (3) concise, and (4) clear. The exposition also does an excellent job of (5) using <i>your own words</i> and (when appropriate) examples to explain the views/ideas/arguments under discussion (so quotes should be used sparingly and only to support, and not replace, the explanation in your own words of the views under discussion).	The exposition does a good job of meeting these criteria but there is some room for improvement. <i>For example</i>, the exposition neglects to mention some important details.	The exposition does an adequate job of meeting these criteria but there is room for quite significant improvements. <i>For example</i>, the exposition is unclear at times, or contains some errors.	The exposition does a poor job of meeting these criteria. <i>For example</i>, there are some serious errors in the exposition, or the exposition is often unclear and difficult to follow.	The exposition does a very poor job of meeting these criteria. <i>For example</i>, the exposition contains many serious errors, or reveals little to no familiarity with the relevant readings.
Critical Discussion	The critical discussion does an excellent job of meeting the following criteria: (1) is insightful (2) makes intelligent choices about what to focus on, (3) provides an in-depth discussion of one or two key critical issues concerning the main topic of the essay, (4) reveals your own reflections on the topic and some independent thinking.	The essay does a good job of meeting these criteria but there is some room for improvement.	The essay does an adequate job of meeting these criteria but there is room for quite significant improvements.	The essay does a poor job of meeting these criteria. <i>For example</i>, the critical discussion	The essay does a very poor job of meeting these criteria. <i>For example</i>,

		<i>For example, the critical discussion is accurate and contains some good points but also neglects some important issues.</i>	<i>For example, the critical discussion was a bit superficial because it tried to cover too many different issues.</i>	contains a number of claims that are unclear, or that are not adequately supported.	there is no developed critical discussion at all, or the critical discussion consists almost entirely in unsupported opinions.
Structure	The essay does an excellent job of (1) having a well-organized structure, and (2) making that structure clear to the reader, for example, through the uses of connective words and signposting. A well-organised essay is one where: (i) importantly different parts of the essay (e.g. the exposition and critical discussion) are clearly demarcated, (ii) the ordering of different parts of the essay is logical and helps the reader to follow and understand the discussion, (iii) an appropriate amount of words is devoted to the different sections of the essay, and (iv) paragraph breaks are used intelligently to break up and order the discussion. See Pryor's "Guidelines for Writing A Philosophy Paper" on how to use connective words and signposting. http://www.jimpryor.net/teaching/guidelines/writing.html	The essay does a good job of meeting these criteria but there is some room for improvement. There are one or two places where the structure could have been better organized or made clearer to the reader.	The essay does an adequate job of meeting these criteria but there is room for quite significant improvements. There are quite a few places where the structure could have been better organized or made clearer to the reader.	The essay structure is of a poor standard. There are too many places where the structure of the essay is poorly organised or needs to be made much clearer to the reader.	The essay structure is of a very poor standard. The essay is very disorganised and contains few attempts to help the reader to understand what structure it does have.
Argumentation	The essay does an excellent job of meeting the following criteria: (1) Arguments are clearly identifiable, (2) premises clearly support the conclusion and (when relevant) the author demonstrates some awareness of <i>how</i> they support that conclusion (e.g. whether they provide deductive or	The essay does a good job of meeting these criteria but there is some room for improvement.	The essay does an adequate job of meeting these criteria but there is room for quite significant improvements.	The essay does a poor job of meeting these criteria.	The essay does a very poor job of meeting these criteria.

	inductive support), (3) all substantive premises, and other important claims, are supported by clearly identified reasons, and (4) relevant counterarguments are anticipated and responded to.				
Introduction	The introduction does an excellent job of meeting the following criteria: (1) is concise and direct (get straight to the point with no extraneous information), (2) provides a brief but still informative characterisation of the main topic, (3) provides a statement of the main thesis of the essay, and (4) indicates the structure of the discussion to come.	The introduction does a good job of meeting these criteria but there is some room for improvement.	The introduction does an adequate job of meeting these criteria but there is room for quite significant improvements.	The introduction does a poor job of meeting these criteria.	The introduction does a very poor job of meeting these criteria.
Form and mechanics	<u>One basic level for levels A, B, and C</u> With only minor exceptions, the essay meets all of the following criteria: (1) the essay is written in good English prose with all sentences being complete and grammatical, (2) punctuation is used correctly, (3) there are no spelling mistakes, (4) words are appropriately chosen for their precise meaning, and (5) one major referencing style is used consistently and all needed references are provided.			The essay does a poor job of addressing one or both of these criteria.	The essay does a very poor job of addressing one or both of these criteria.