

Criteria	Excellent (4)	Proficient (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning (1)
Content	Thoroughly addresses the topic with well-developed ideas, strong evidence, and insightful analysis	Addresses the topic effectively with relevant ideas and evidence but lacks depth or insight	Partially addresses the topic; ideas are underdeveloped or lack sufficient support	Does not address the topic effectively; ideas are unclear or unsupported
Organization	Clear and logical structure with a strong introduction, cohesive body paragraphs, and a clear conclusion	Well-organized, but transitions or flow could be improved in some areas	Basic structure, but lacks coherence or logical flow	Disorganized and difficult to follow, with no clear structure
Thesis Statement	Clear, concise, and arguable thesis that guides the entire essay effectively	Clear thesis, but it could be more concise, specific, or arguable	Thesis is present but lacks clarity, specificity, or focus	No clear thesis or the thesis does not align with the essay content
Style and Voice	Engaging and appropriate tone with varied sentence structure and precise word choice	Appropriate tone and word choice, but lacks engagement or variety in style	Tone is inconsistent, and sentence structure is basic or repetitive	Inappropriate tone or style; writing is confusing or lacks variety
Grammar and Mechanics	Free of errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling; polished and professional	Minor errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling that do not affect readability	Frequent errors in grammar, punctuation, or spelling that impact readability	Numerous errors that significantly hinder understanding
Critical Thinking	Demonstrates exceptional analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of ideas with insightful connections	Shows good analytical thinking with relevant connections, though less developed	Limited analysis or critical thinking; few connections between ideas	Little to no analysis or critical thinking; ideas are unsupported or vague